

Target 3: Conserved areas

Main elements to be addressed in this target:

- Purpose and total area
 - Purpose of conserved areas is to maintain species and habitats in a good conservation status and within planetary boundaries
 - Sufficient total amount of area-based conservation measures to ensure that all threatened species and ecosystems are adequately protected in order to remain within the planetary boundaries

More areas to protect endangered species are needed, but there needs to be a specific focus on the purpose of area-based conservation, which is “to ensure that wild flora, fauna and habitats are maintained at, or restored to a favourable conservation status”.

- equitably governed and effectively managed

Protected areas can only deliver when they are effectively governed and managed (so that they produce the outcomes for which they were designed). Unfortunately, there are too many conserved areas that are no more than paper parks.

- ICCAs as a specific and priority category in area-based conservation

Given the important role that areas governed by IPLCs have in conserving biodiversity (cf. IPBES global assessment report), they need to have preference over protected areas and other community-based conservation measures where applicable.

- Full respect for human rights, including FPIC

In many countries, the top down installation of protected areas has led to evictions combined with violence and other human rights infractions. These must be absolutely avoided, both through highlighting in the target (including the need for free prior and informed consent) and through monitoring the respect of Human rights obligations related protected areas in all parties, with a specific headline indicator.

Elements that should NOT be part of the target

- Any reference to or possibility for conservation which excludes IPLCs or people in general (often referred to as “Fortress conservation”)

Protected and conserved areas should be made conditional on the recognition of the rights of IPLC including FPIC.

Indigenous territories and the lands of local communities need to be included in the definition of conserved areas, and designation and governance need to be inclusive and participative everywhere/

Elements that should be part of the target

- Respect for the rights of IPLCs with explicit reference to UNDRIP and UNDROP

IPLCs and ICCAs have demonstrated to be the best guardians of nature, wherever this is applicable. However, their rights have been violated often in the name of nature conservation. Therefore, all future area-based conservation needs to take into account their rights.

- Governance by IPLCs

- Recognition of importance of IPLCs in the equitable governance and effective management of such areas,
- Recognition of the areas governed by them.

Governance by IPLCs is essential as this is the principal way in which they can ensure conservation. Furthermore, this is the only fair and equitable way. In order for them to be able to govern their areas effectively, their traditional governance structures, and well as their territories, need to be properly recognised.

➤ Participative, equitable and gender-just governance, as well as effective management
Protected areas only deliver when they are developed and governed participatively and equitably and gender justly.

➤ Ecological representativity

Conserved areas should be designated in places where the species and habitats under threat occur and represent all of the diversity of habitats and species, in all regions etc.

➤ Ecological connectivity

Isolated “islands” of conserved areas surrounded by degraded areas, or areas where potentially biodiversity-destructive activities are undertaken, by definition cannot be effective. Thus, the designation/recognition of conservation measures should constitute a broader ecologically coherent network.

Further reading on this target:

- Simon Counsell, ‘Conservationists claim that their aim to place thirty per cent of the planet in protected areas by 2030 is supported by science. It isn’t. What the science does and doesn’t say about 30×30’, REDDmonitor March 2022, <https://redd-monitor.org/2022/03/07/conservationists-claim-that-their-aim-to-place-thirty-per-cent-of-the-planet-in-protected-areas-by-2030-is-supported-by-science-it-isnt-what-the-science-does-and-doesnt-say-about-3/>
- Why a 30 per cent blanket target on protected areas is not enough - F. Wulf in rural 21, June 2021 https://www.rural21.com/english/current-issue/detail/article/why-a-30-per-cent-blanket-target-on-protected-areas-is-not-enough.html?no_cache=1