

Target 6: Invasive Alien Species

The main aim of the target

- Further introduction of IAS should be prevented

It is vital to address the underlying causes and drivers of IAS: i.e., large industrial agricultural monocultures where IAS multiply rapidly; chemical destruction of species that could use IAS as prey; and to identify pathways of introduction and transfer of IAS, e.g. movement of plants around the world without proper prevention and control measures, pet trade, use of pesticides that open up niches for new pests.

Elements to be replaced

- “Manage pathways” to be replaced by “Avoid” or “Prevent” the introduction of IAS

It is highly unclear what “manage pathways” actually means.

- “50%” should be “80%”

IAS constitute a significant threat to biodiversity, ecosystems and sustainable, biodiverse agriculture; they must be controlled as much as possible. 50% is not sufficient.

Elements that should NOT be part of the target

- Gene drives

This is an example of ‘innovation’, which has side- and long-term effects that are entirely unknown, unpredictable and could be devastating. The text should not name specific technologies, and gene drive technologies should not be considered a tool for biodiversity conservation.

- Innovation and the use of new tools

Having language focus solely on ‘innovation’ opens the door for potentially high-risk synthetic biology technologies (e.g.: gene drives) to be developed and adopted without assessment and comprehensive evaluations. The CBD should address the underlying causes of invasive species, and the text should emphasise traditional knowledge, land management, and stewardship.

Elements that should be part of the target

- Identify IAS

Continuous follow-up of the appearance of new IAS is as essential as pre-empting new introductions, e.g. through analyses of introduction pathways. Awareness of IAS presence is critical, and early identification makes controlling them more likely.

- Control and eradicate in a sustainable manner

Ways of dealing with IAS should be environmentally sound and not generate new risks for the environment or other forms of degradation.