

## Target 8: Climate change

### The main element to be addressed in this target:

- The impacts of climate change and related policies and measures on biodiversity

The responsibility of the CBD is biodiversity, and this should be the first focus,

- Addressing the common drivers of climate change and biodiversity loss

Wherever drivers lead to biodiversity loss and climate change, the CBD must take responsibility for its part in the crisis.

### Elements that should be part of the target

- Minimise the impact of climate change on biodiversity by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from all sources

While the primary responsibility for regulating the reduction of GHG is with the UNFCCC, the impacts of climate change on biodiversity are huge.

For some sectors, such as forests and agriculture, policy measures by the CBD can also significantly contribute to emission reductions.

- Reduction of the threats to biodiversity from climate change

The objective of the GBF is to reduce the threats to biodiversity – in this target from climate change - by reducing GHG emissions from all sources, including from deforestation and agriculture and industrial-scale animal production.

- Avoidance of adverse effects and threats from policies addressing climate change

Examples: geoengineering; large-scale afforestation that replaces forests with tree plantations, bioenergy and bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) projects,

- Protecting and restoring ecosystem integrity and, in particular, primary ecosystems

These ecosystems contain the most terrestrial biodiversity, store the most carbon, and by retaining their biodiversity, are also the most stable, meaning their carbon is at the lowest risk of being released via natural disturbance.

- Prioritisation of climate actions and policies that enhance biodiversity

Examples are approaches for ecosystem restoration and sustainable, resilient, and equitable management practices in agriculture, such as agroecology, agroforestry, and silvo-pastoralism.

- Rights of IPLC and, in particular, women

Many climate measures and policies undermine the rights of IPLCs, while in fact, it is IPLCs who are doing the most to preserve biodiversity and the climate.

- Conservation of rich natural ecosystems

Natural ecosystems are paramount to preserving the climate AND biodiversity. Forests, peatlands, savannas and oceans, in particular, need protection to enable a stable planet.

- Ecosystem approach

Decision V/6 defined this concept, offering a very comprehensive understanding. Climate mitigation and adaptation must comply with the CBD ecosystem approach. The extent to which carbon stocks are sustained as self-regenerating is crucial, so they must be embedded in natural ecosystems. Otherwise, plantations (usually fast-growing, often with alien or GM trees) may be planted with the claim that they offset emissions from industrial processes.

## Elements that should NOT be part of the target

- Nature Based Solutions

Rather than being oriented to solving the biodiversity crisis, NBS is promoted and framed in the CBD as a solution for corporate sectors and portrayed as contributing to climate mitigation and adaptation. It risks introducing elements harmful to biodiversity, such as monoculture tree plantations and gene drives.

There are insufficient guarantees that “safeguards” for NBS would work, while there are many indications that the interests of businesses and policymakers would override human rights concerns. There are no governance structures for NBS which could follow up on possible abuse of the term.

The term nature-based solutions is used in many different contexts, many of which are counterproductive for the environment. In particular, offsetting and greenwashing NBS-projects by corporations can undermine real biodiversity benefits. As UNEA has recognised, they might have long-term impacts on the climate regime.

- Geoengineering and BECCS

Decision X/33 of the CBD addresses the negative impacts of geoengineering on biodiversity. It states that “no climate-related geo-engineering activities that may affect biodiversity take place until there is an adequate scientific basis [...]”

BECCS is a specific form of geoengineering that relies heavily on plantations for biomass, which negatively impacts biodiversity.

- 10GTeq in emission reductions

The target should reflect actions and objectives for the protection and restoration of biodiversity. Carbon is not a metric that can do this.

Carbon storage varies widely across ecosystems and doesn't necessarily correlate with the richness of biodiversity. Using a carbon-based target could incentivise the destruction of species-rich ecosystems and the promotion of projects focused on carbon sequestration, such as monoculture tree plantations or BECCS projects.

- Carbon offsets

Offsets do not imply a reduction; at best, they mean a displacement from one site of emissions to another. More often, there is double-counting, baseline problems and others which imply that carbon offsets do not raise ambition but are a loss for the climate. As UNEA has recognised, they might have long-term impacts on the climate regime.

The CBD should facilitate biodiversity policies and not facilitate carbon offsetting.

- Focusing on high-carbon ecosystems

All ecosystems suffer from climate change, and they all have their contribution to the planetary system. The role of the CBD is to protect them all, independent of their carbon contribution. Focusing on specific ecosystems risks these being used as an offset for the

climate. There is a risk that certain types of ecosystems, and even monoculture tree plantations, are imposed in places where they are not the natural habitat.

## Further reading on target

*Briefing note on Target 8, Friends of the Earth International, 2021* <https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Target-8-Briefing-note.pdf>

*Our Nature is Not Your Solution – and FAO’s Plantations are even less of a Solution! Global Forest Coalition, 2020* <https://globalforestcoalition.org/faos-plantations/>

*Nature based solutions: a wolf in sheep’s clothing, Friends of the Earth International* <https://www.foei.org/publication/nature-based-solutions-a-wolf-in-sheeps-clothing/>

*A Leap in the Dark: The Dangers of Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS), Friends of the Earth International, 2021,* [https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Friends-of-the-Earth-International\\_BECCS\\_English.pdf](https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Friends-of-the-Earth-International_BECCS_English.pdf)