The Sustainable Development Goals Extended Report 2024

Inputs and information provided as of 30 April 2024

Note: This unedited 'Extended Report' includes all indicator storyline contents as provided by the SDG indicator custodian agencies as of 30 April 2024. For instances where the custodian agency has not submitted a storyline for an indicator, please see the custodian agency focal point information for further information. The 'Extended Report' aims to provide the public with additional information regarding the SDG indicators and is compiled by the Statistics Division (UNSD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

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Target 15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

Indicator 15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area

In 2020, forest covered 31.2% of the total land area, 100 million ha less than in 2000

The proportion of the world's total land area covered by forest has declined from 31.9 percent in 2000 (4.2 billion hectares) to 31.5 percent in 2010, further decreasing to 31.2 percent (4.1 billion hectares) by 2020. Over the past two decades, net forest area losses have amounted to nearly 100 million hectares. However, there has been a slight deceleration in the rate of loss observed over the last ten years.

Net forest area change is a result of two factors – increase in forest area through afforestation and natural expansion, and decrease cause by deforestation. Agricultural expansion is the primary driver behind almost 90 percent of global deforestation. Cropland expansion is the most significant of direct deforestation driver (49.6 percent), followed by livestock grazing (38.5 percent). Oil palm cultivation alone contributed to 7 percent of global deforestation from 2000 to 2018. Poverty and lack of access to technology might be rooting global deforestation, as most of the conversion of forest to agricultural lands was associated with small-scale farming.

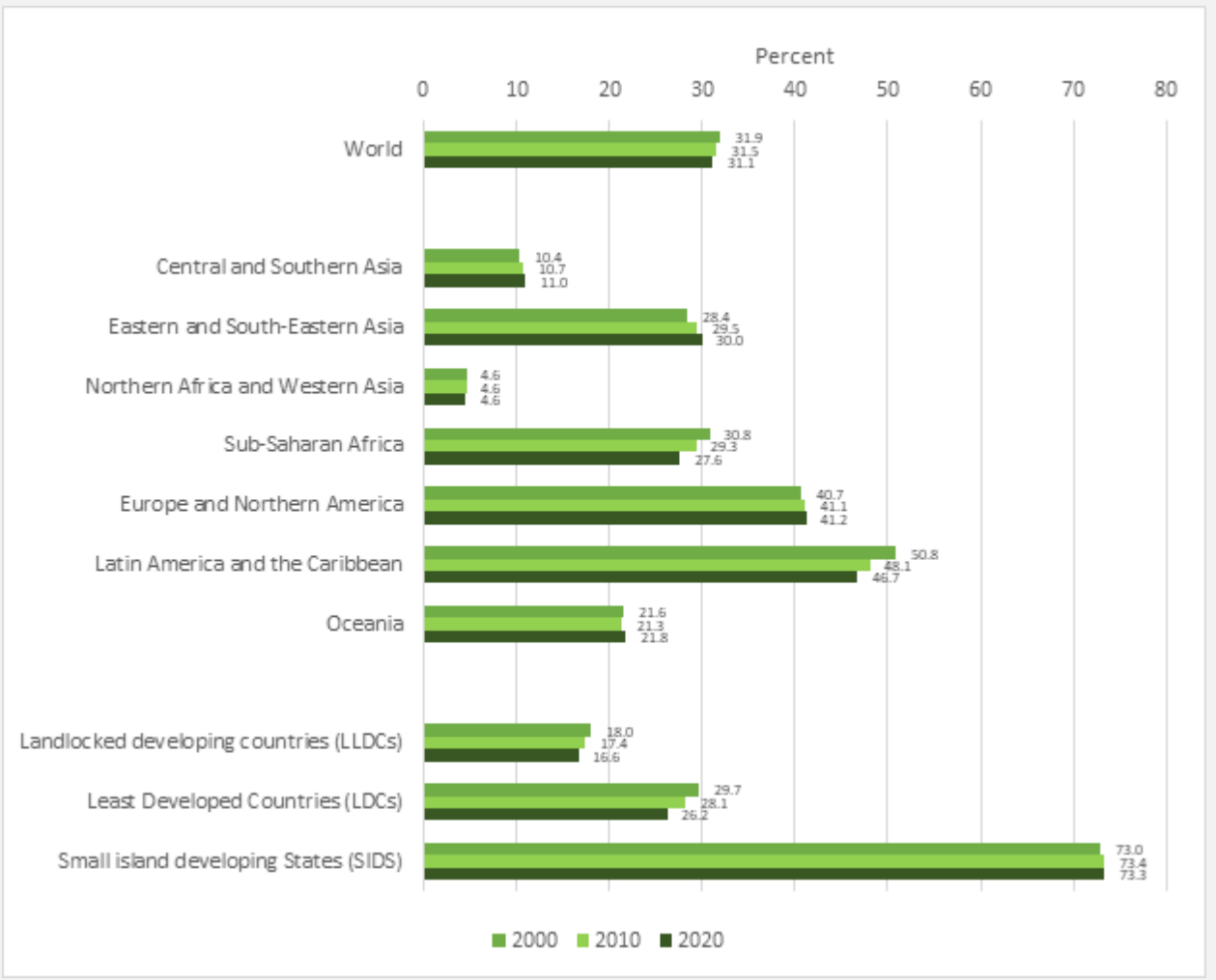
The global trend reflects opposing regional dynamics. Asia, Europe, and Northern America showed an overall increase in forest area from 2000 to 2020 due to afforestation, forest restoration efforts, and natural forest expansion. This expansion slowed down from 2010 to 2020 compared to the period from 2000 to 2010. On the other hand, large forest area losses occurred over the past two decades in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, with least developed countries particularly impacted by forest area reductions. While livestock grazing is the primary cause of deforestation in Latin America, in Sub-Saharan Africa forest loss mostly stems from cropland expansion.

Forests play a vital role in the livelihoods and well-being of rural and urban populations, contributing significantly to regulating the water cycle, mitigating climate change, and harboring the majority of the world's terrestrial biodiversity. Building capacities for forest management and increased agricultural productivity seems to be critical to halt forest loss and the negative dynamics caused by the associated disruption of ecosystem, impacting climate, human-wildlife interactions, land-use activities, and ecosystem services provision, especially in the tropics and least developed countries.

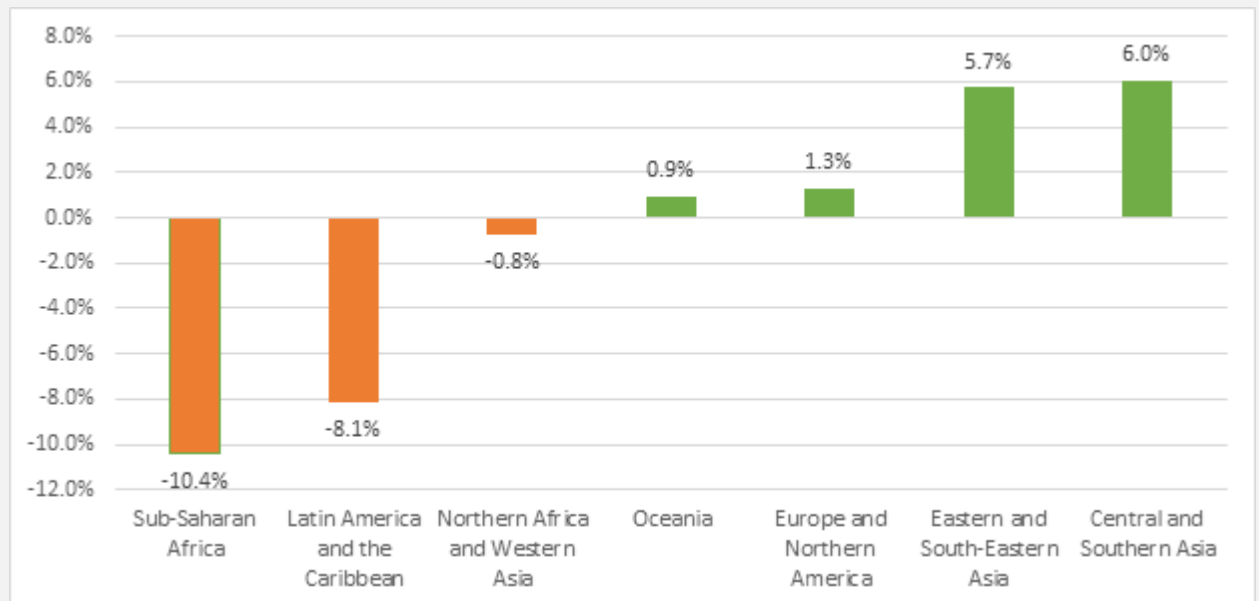
The short and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 and post-pandemic period on forest area are yet to be fully measured, although they directly affected forest cover and forestry due to changes in urban-rural population flows, increased demand for certain forest products and other factors. Many rural areas, particularly in the tropics, faced heightened pressures from deforestation and illegal logging during the COVID-19.

This annual update of indicator 15.1.1 is based on the latest data from the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2020, which used on the best available country data and information. Information on deforestation drivers was sourced from the latest FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment Remote Sensing Survey published in 2022. New data on forest area status and trends will be released in 2025 as part of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025.

Forest area as proportion of total land area (in percent)



Change in the proportion of forest from 2000 to 2020 by region



Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment Website: http://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/en/
- FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment online data platform: https://fra-data.fao.org/
- FAO and UNEP. 2020. The State of the World's Forests 2020. Forests, biodiversity and people. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/ca8642en
- FAO. 2022. The State of the World's Forests 2022. Forest pathways for green recovery and building inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies. Rome, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb9360en
- FAO. 2022. FRA 2020 Remote Sensing Survey. FAO Forestry Paper, No. 186. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb9970en
- Branthomme, A., Merle, C., Kindgard, A., Lourenço, A., Ng, W.-T., D'Annunzio, R. & Shapiro, A. 2023. How much do large-scale and small-scale farming contribute to global deforestation? Results from a remote sensing pilot approach. Rome, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc5723en

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Custodian agency(ies): FAO

Indicator 15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type

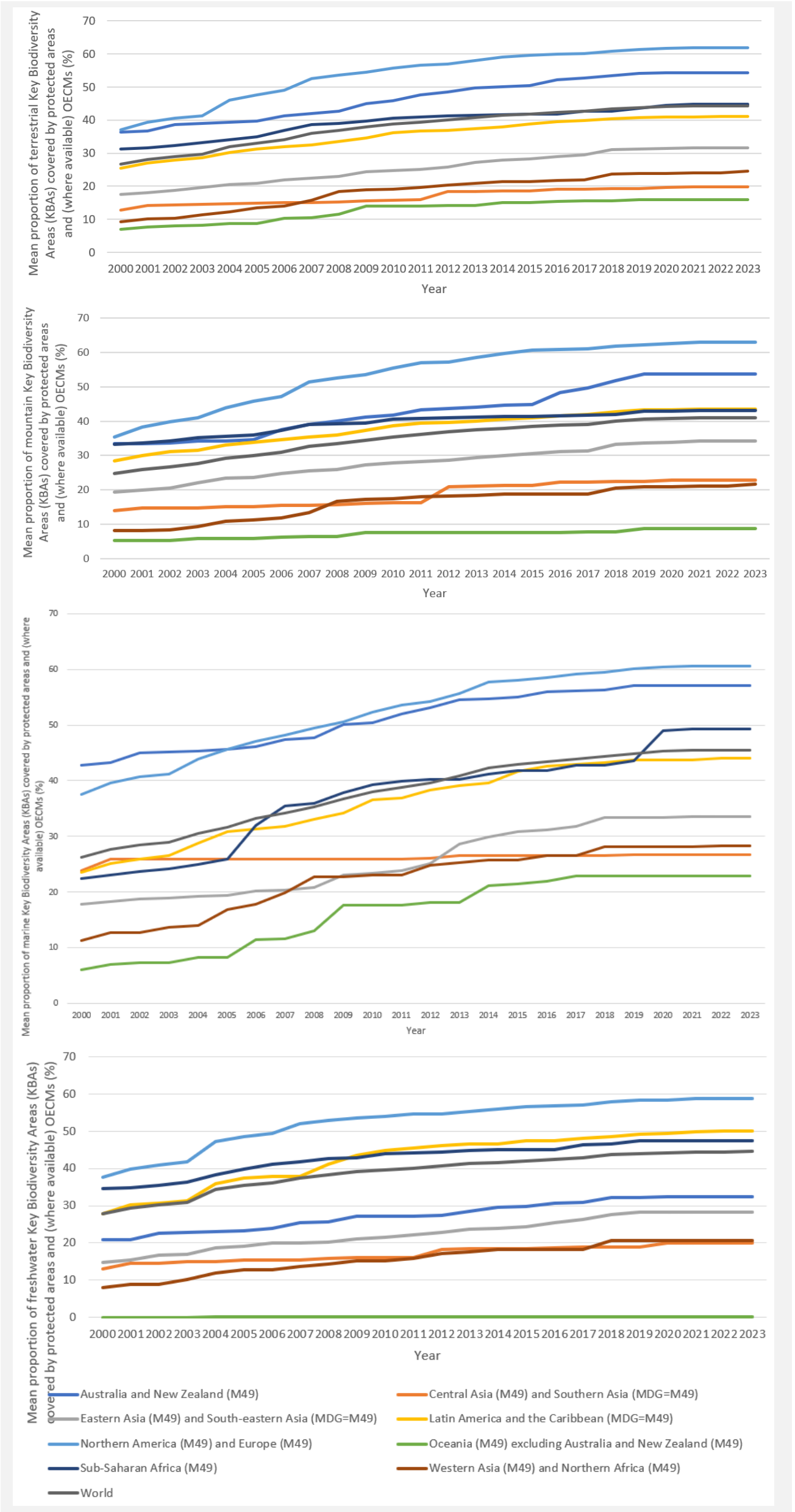
While good progress has been made over recent years towards safeguarding Key Biodiversity Areas – sites of particular importance for biodiversity – in Northern America and Europe, progress has stagnated overall, especially in Asia, Oceania, and Northern Africa, jeopardising the achievement of SDGs 14 and 15, as well as Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Both life on earth and the threats it faces are distributed highly unevenly around the planet. Given this, tracking progress towards nature conservation action targets measures how extensively protected areas cover Key Biodiversity Areas, that is, areas of particular importance for biodiversity. This is essential for SDG Targets 14.5 (for marine environments), 15.1 (for terrestrial and freshwater environments), and 15.4 (for mountain environments), as well as for Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Target 3.

More than 16,000 Key Biodiversity Areas have been identified to date, across all the world's countries, through nationally led exercises in all countries applying internationally standardised criteria. All Key Biodiversity Areas are documented in the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas. All global data on protected areas and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) are provided by the Protected Planet Initiative.

While this indicator showed substantial improvements prior to 2000, its growth has stagnated over the last two decades. The situation is particularly worrying in Central, Southern, and Western Asia, Northern Africa, and Oceania, all of which still have average coverage of Key Biodiversity Areas by protected areas of less than 30% across each of terrestrial, mountain, marine, and freshwater ecosystems. Coverage in Eastern and South-eastern Asia is also only marginally above 30%. This shortfall in safeguard allows loss of these critically important sites, as witnessed, for example, in ongoing construction of coal transport roads in Indonesia's Hutan Harapan Key Biodiversity Area.

Progress has been more positive in Northern America and Europe, where coverage of Key Biodiversity Areas is now around 60% in each of terrestrial, mountain, freshwater, and marine environments. Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Australia and New Zealand have also shown progress, with coverage above 40% in most cases. An excellent example of a Key Biodiversity Area where protection yielded effective safeguards in 2023 comes from Namibia, where oil drilling was halted to the west of the Okavango Delta Key Biodiversity Area in response to concerns regarding its likely impacts on the wetland. Meanwhile, in Ecuador, the courts ruled in favour of local community conservation in the Intag-Toisán Key Biodiversity Area, halting copper mining from jeopardising the persistence of the Critically Endangered Longnose Stubfoot Toad and dozens of other species.



Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- A Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas (IUCN 2016) https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/46259

- World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas (BirdLife International et al. 2023) https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org
- Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM), October 2023 (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, 2023) https://www.protectedplanet.net/en
- Key Biodiversity Areas Training Course https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/kba-news/key-biodiversity-areas-training-website
- Key Biodiversity Areas Programme Annual Report 2022 https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/assets/34263416-4b07-11ee-be56-0242ac120002
- Key Biodiversity Area National Coordination Groups https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/working-with-kbas/programme/national-coordination-groups
- Targeting site conservation to increase the effectiveness of new global biodiversity targets https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332223005638
- We must conserve the right places to halt extinction and reduce biodiversity loss https://www.iucn.org/crossroads-blog/202401/we-must-conserve-right-places-halt-extinction-and-reduce-biodiversity-loss
- Harapan – an update https://community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/actionfornature/posts/harapan---an-update
- Meranti, Indonesia https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/15841
- Canadian oil company pauses controversial drilling in Namibian wilderness https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/canadian-oil-company-reconafrica-pause-drilling-namibia
- Okavango Delta, Botswana https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/6047
- Ecuador court upholds 'rights of nature,' blocks Intag Valley copper mine https://news.mongabay.com/2023/03/ecuador-court-upholds-rights-of-nature-blocks-intag-valley-copper-mine/
- Intag-Toisán Key Biodiversity Area https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/14566

Storyline authors(s)/contributor(s): Thomas Brooks, IUCN; Stuart Butchart, BirdLife International; Emily Howland, UNEP-WCMC; Benjamin Lucas, UNEP-WCMC; Andy Plumptre, KBA Secretariat; Tom Scott, BirdLife International

Custodian agency(ies): UNEP-WCMC, UNEP, IUCN

Target 15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

Indicator 15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management

The global progresses towards sustainable forest management is evident; However, the rate of forest loss persist at a high level

Indicator 15.2.1 shows evident global strides towards sustainable forest management over the past decade. However, it also highlights the persistent shrinkage of the world's forests, primarily attributed to agricultural expansion for crop and livestock production, with progress varying across regions.

In 2023, 389 million hectares of forest were under a certification scheme, marking a 13 percent increase, equivalent to around 46 million hectares since 2010. Despite this overall positive trend, forest under a certification scheme presented a decrease of 56 million hectares (a 12 percent) between 2022 and 2023, primarily linked to suspension of certificates in Europe due to ongoing conflicts. Europe and Northern America collectively represent 79% percent of the certified forest area in 2023.

Globally, the proportion of forest area within protected areas increased from 17 percent to 18 percent from 2010 to 2020. Central Asia showed the highest proportion of forest in protected areas in 2020 (59 percent), along with the highest relative increase since 2010 (12 percent). Conversely, Europe and North America exhibit the lowest proportion, with only 6 percent of their forests within protected areas.

Forest area under a management plan has seen an increase from 2010 to 2020, particularly notable in Central Asia and Eastern Asia. Despite a gradual increase, the proportion of forest under management plans remains below one third in Latin America and the Caribbean, Oceania, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The above-ground biomass in forests has slightly increased, primarily driven by notable rises in Eastern Asia, Europe, and Western Asia.

The annual forest change rate remains relatively stable at the global level (around -0.1 percent), indicating that the loss of forests persists, even if not accelerating. Notable forest expansion occurred in Asia, Europe, and Northern America during 2010-2020, while significant losses were recorded in Africa, South-Eastern Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. These losses were mainly due to agricultural expansion. Deforestation and forest degradation remain significant challenges, especially in the tropics, least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing states (SIDS), emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced actions to reduce deforestation and implement sustainable forest and land management practices, including for small-scale farmers.

Although assessing the short and long-term impacts of COVID-19 and post-pandemic era on forests is challenging, it is likely that they have affected forests and forestry due to changes in urban-rural population flows and shifts in the demand for certain forest products.

Forests serve as the largest carbon and biodiversity reservoirs on Earth and are essential sources of food, goods, and services, crucial for the livelihoods of the poorest populations and rural communities. Efforts at both global and regional levels to sustain forest ecosystems and their social, economic, and environmental functions should be intensified, with particular emphasis on the tropics and developing countries.

This annual update of indicator 15.2.1 is based on the latest data from the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2020, as well as the most recent certification data updated for 2023 from forest certification organizations (FSC and PEFC). FAO Global Forest Resources Assessments are based on the best available country data and information to date. New data on forest status and trends will be released in 2025 as part of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025.

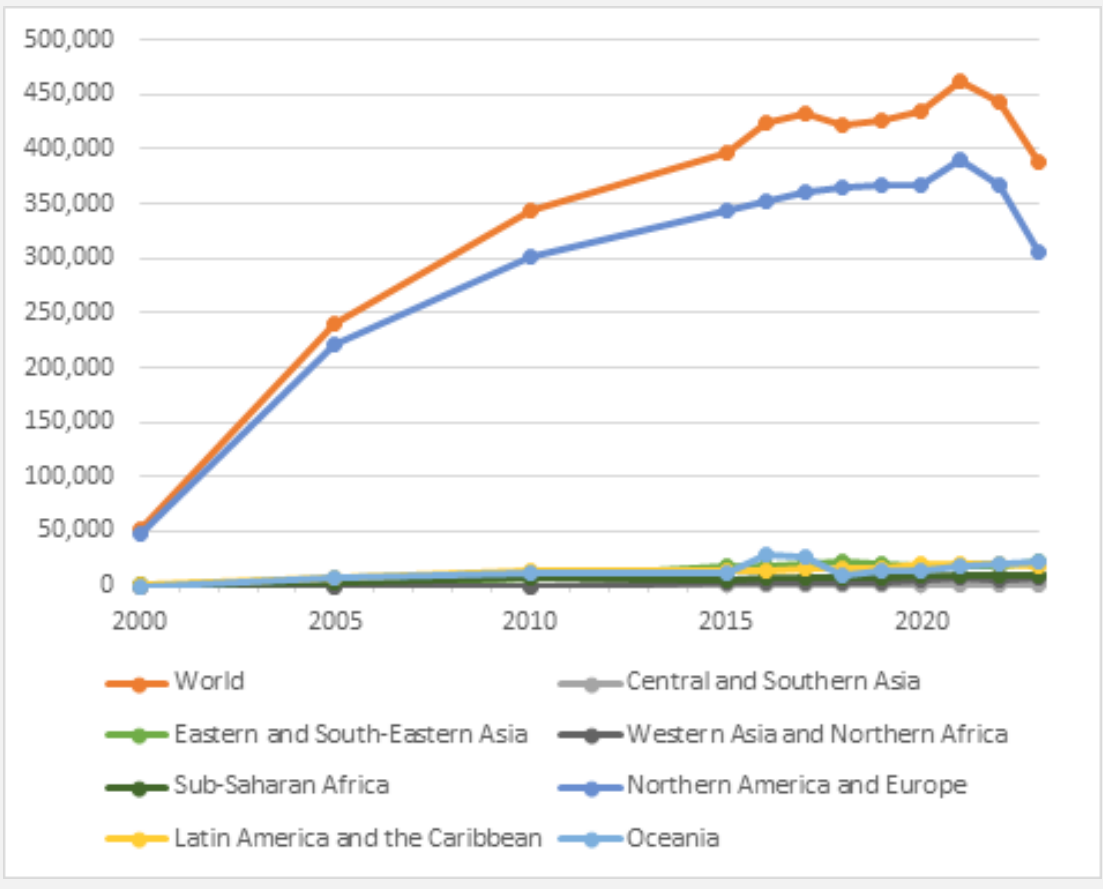
Progress toward sustainable forest management at regional and global level

SDG Region	Progress between 2000-2010 and 2010-2020 decades	Progress between 2010 and 2020			Progress between 2010 and 2023	Progress between 2022 and 2023
	Annual forest area change rate [1]	Above-ground biomass stock in forest (t/ha)	Proportion of forest area within legally established protected areas	Proportion of forest area under a long-term forest management plan	Forest area certified (2010-2023)	Forest area certified (2022-2023)
World	●	●	●	●	●	●
Central and Southern Asia	●	●	●	●	●	●
Central Asia	●	●	●	●		
Southern Asia	●	●	●	●	●	●
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	●	●	●	●	●	●
Eastern Asia	●	●	●	●	●	●
South-Eastern Asia	●	●	●	●	●	●
Western Asia and Northern Africa	●	●	●	●	●	●
Northern Africa	●	●	●	●	●	
Western Asia	●	●	●	●		●
Sub-Saharan Africa	●	●	●	●	●	●
Northern America and Europe	●	●	●	●	●	●
Europe	●	●	●	●	●	●
Northern America	●	●	●	●	●	●
Latin America and the Caribbean	●	●	●	●	●	●
Oceania	●	●	●	●	●	●
Oceania (exc. Australia and New Zealand)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Australia and New Zealand	●	●	●	●	●	●
Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Least Developed Countries (LDCs)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Small island developing States (SIDS)	●	●	●	●	●	●

[1] The annual forest area change rate is calculated using compound interest formula.

● Positive change
● No/small change
● Negative change
No certified forest area

Trends in certified forest area at regional and global level



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Custodian agency(ies): FAO

Target 15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world

Indicator 15.3.1 Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area

Custodian agency(ies): UNCCD

Target 15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development

Indicator 15.4.1 Coverage by protected areas of important sites for mountain biodiversity

While good progress has been made over recent years towards safeguarding Key Biodiversity Areas – sites of particular importance for biodiversity – in Northern America and Europe, progress has stagnated overall, especially in Asia, Oceania, and Northern Africa, jeopardising the achievement of SDGs 14 and 15, as well as Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

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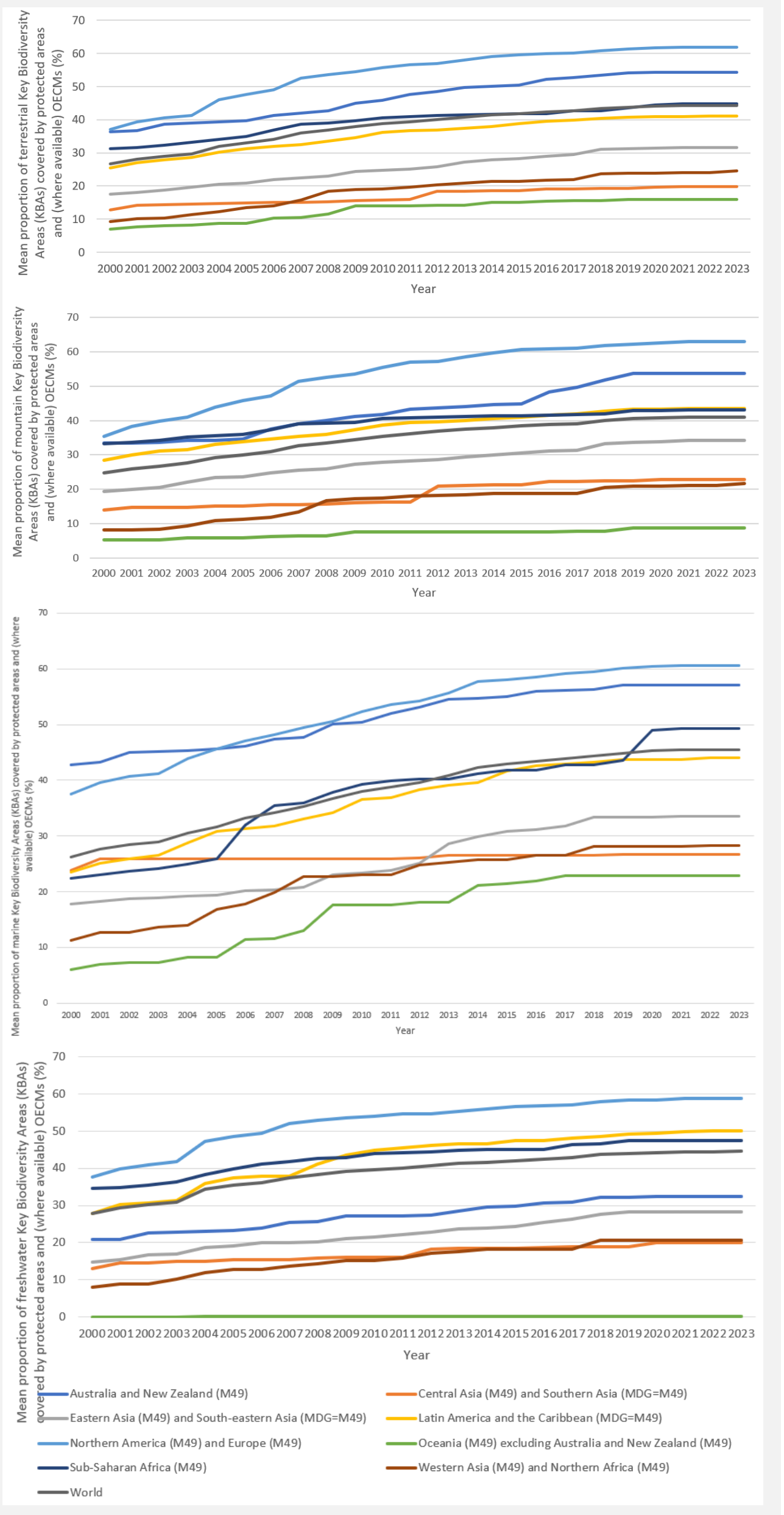

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- Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM), October 2023 (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, 2023) https://www.protectedplanet.net/en
- Key Biodiversity Areas Training Course https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/kba-news/key-biodiversity-areas-training-website
- Key Biodiversity Areas Programme Annual Report 2022 https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/assets/34263416-4b07-11ee-be56-0242ac120002
- Key Biodiversity Area National Coordination Groups https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/working-with-kbas/programme/national-coordination-groups
- Targeting site conservation to increase the effectiveness of new global biodiversity targets https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332223005638
- We must conserve the right places to halt extinction and reduce biodiversity loss https://www.iucn.org/crossroads-blog/202401/we-must-conserve-right-places-halt-extinction-and-reduce-biodiversity-loss
- Harapan – an update https://community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/actionfornature/posts/harapan---an-update
- Meranti, Indonesia https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/15841
- Canadian oil company pauses controversial drilling in Namibian wilderness https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/canadian-oil-company-reconafrica-pause-drilling-namibia
- Okavango Delta, Botswana https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/6047
- Ecuador court upholds 'rights of nature,' blocks Intag Valley copper mine https://news.mongabay.com/2023/03/ecuador-court-upholds-rights-of-nature-blocks-intag-valley-copper-mine/
- Intag-Toisán Key Biodiversity Area https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/14566

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Custodian agency(ies): UNEP-WCMC, UNEP, IUCN

Indicator 15.4.2 (a) Mountain Green Cover Index and (b) proportion of degraded mountain land

Assessing the Status of Conservation of Mountain ecosystems: Stability of Green Cover and Degradation Trends Revealed

The Mountain Green Cover Index (MGCI) (Indicator 15.4.2.a) measures changes in the area of green vegetation in mountain areas (forest, shrubs and pasture land, and cropland), while the Proportion of degraded mountain land (Indicator 15.4.2.b) monitors the extent of degraded mountain land as a result of land cover change of a given country and for given reporting year. The Mountain Green Cover Index (MGCI) is designed to measure the extent and the changes of green vegetation in mountain areas - i.e. forest, shrubs, trees, pasture land, crop land, etc. – in order to monitor progress towards the mountain target over time. MGCI is defined as the percentage of green cover over the total surface of the mountain region of a given country and for given reporting year.

Mountains, characterized by their fragility, are undergoing widespread transformations due to a combination of both natural and anthropogenic factors. These include climate change, natural hazards such as landslides and flooding, unplanned agricultural expansion, unplanned urbanization, timber extraction and recreational activities. The primary objective of the MGCI index is indeed to monitor the evolution of the green cover and thus assess the status of conservation of mountain ecosystems. The degradation of mountain ecosystems, marked by diminishing glacial coverage, biodiversity loss, and vegetation decline, poses a threat to downstream water provision. This undermines efforts aimed at protecting, restoring, and ensuring sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems. Furthermore, the reduction in forest and vegetation cover diminishes the ecosystem's ability to prevent soil erosion, heightening the risk of landslides and flooding downstream.

The available global data displays that the proportion of degraded mountain land occurred during the 2000-2018 period to be of approximately 1.6 percent of the world's total mountain area. Disaggregation of mountainous areas by land cover and geographical region provides additional insights, allowing to visualize how biophysical characteristics and historic and recent land uses shape their landscapes. The disaggregated data indicate that the mountain belts that are mostly affected by detrimental land cover changes were the alpine (1.84 percent) and the montane (1.71 percent) belts, while nival areas were the least affected (0.09 percent). Disaggregation by both SDG regions and bioclimatic belts show that the areas with the highest proportion of degraded mountain land are the alpine areas of Europe and Northern America (2.29 percent), followed by the montane areas of Central and Southern Asia (2.22 percent) and the remaining mountain areas of Eastern and Southern Asia (2.17 percent). It is crucial to carefully analyze MGCI values to discern the lasting effects of climate change in mountainous areas. Examining the changes in vegetation across different elevation zones over time will aid in identifying suitable management and adaptation strategies.

Chart 1: Proportion of Degraded Mountain Land (%), 2018

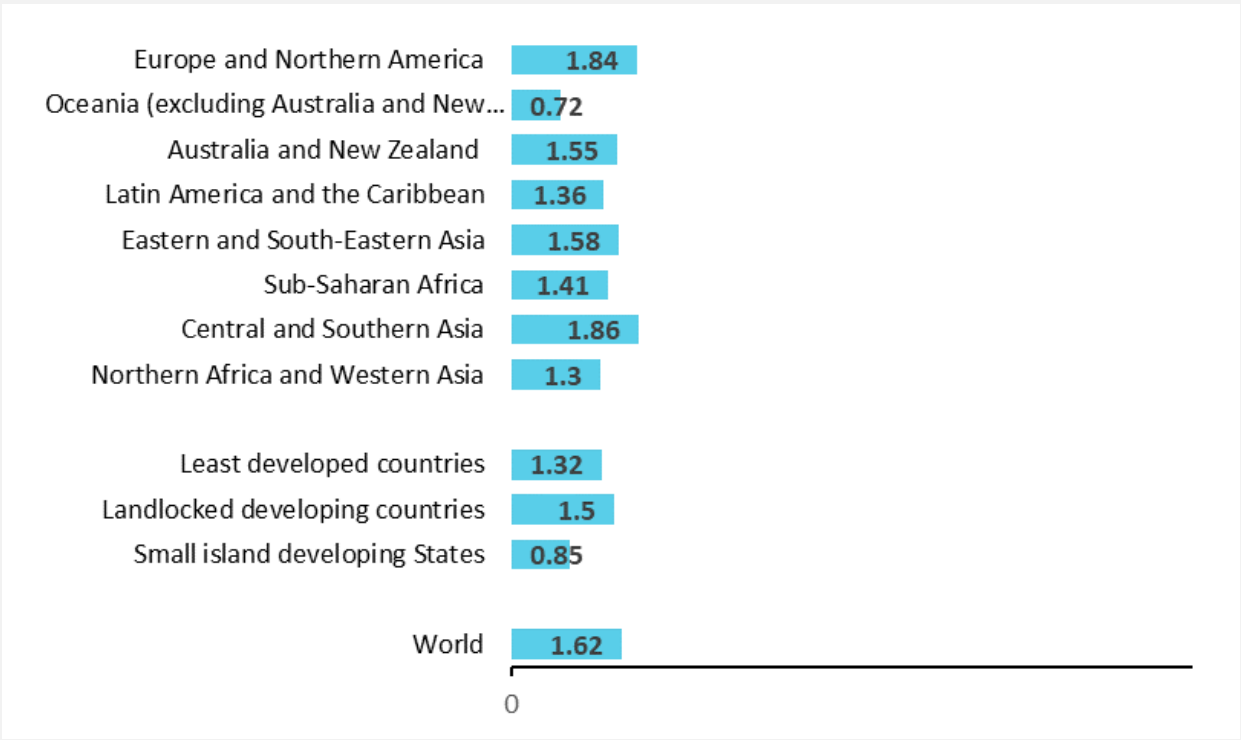


Chart 2: Proportion of degraded mountain land (%), by Bioclimatic Belts

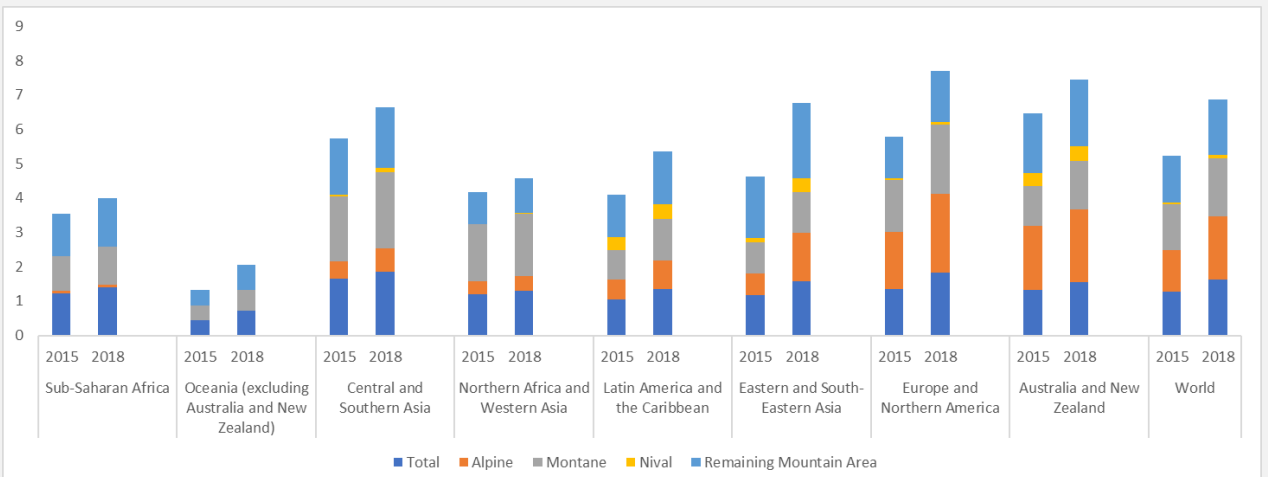


Chart 3: Mountain Green Cover Index (%), 2018

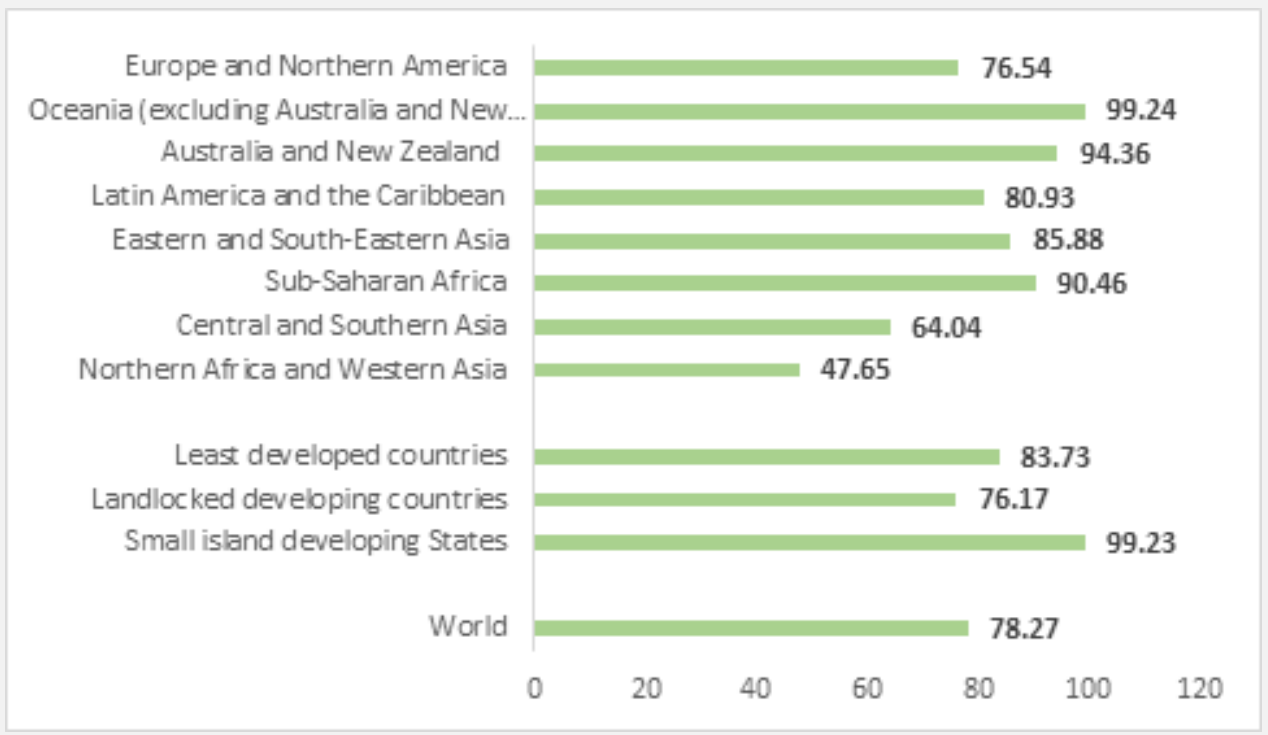
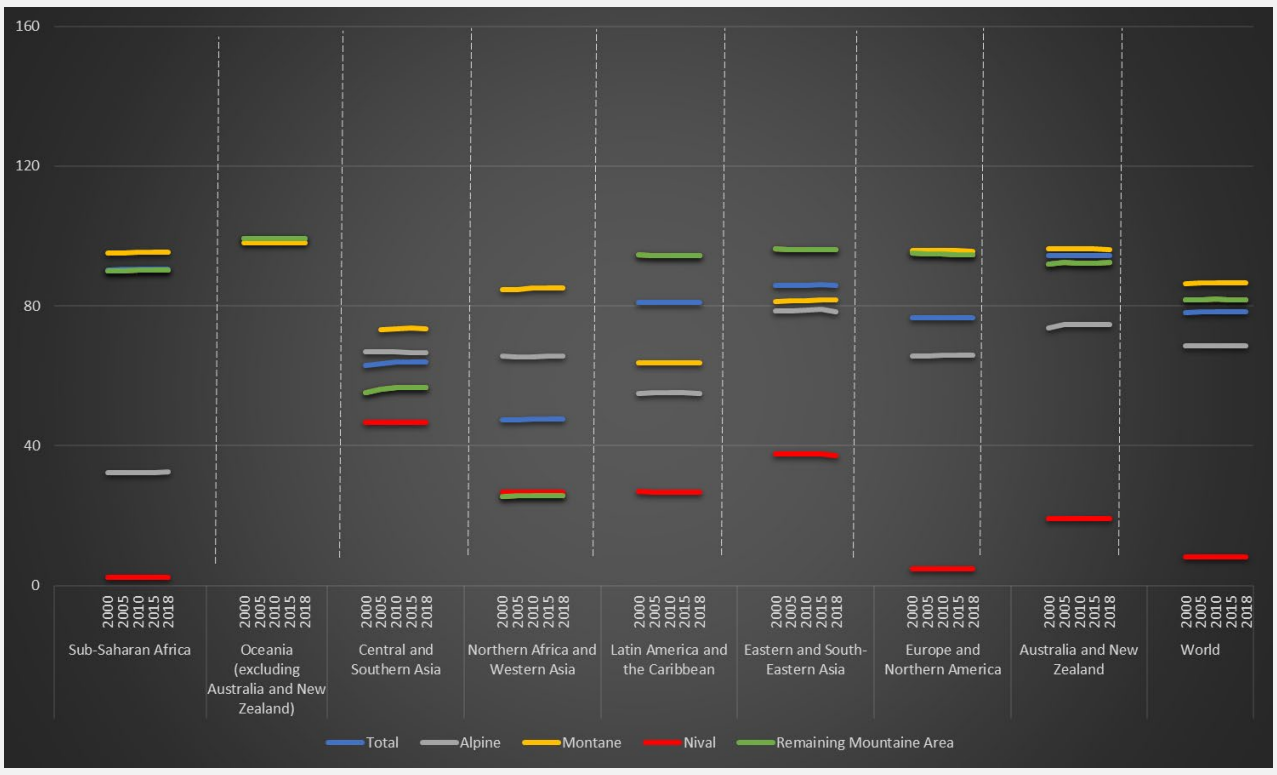


Chart 4: Mountain Green Cover Index (%), by Bioclimatic Belts



Storyline authors(s)/contributor(s): Authors

Custodian agency(ies): FAO

Target 15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species

Indicator 15.5.1 Red List Index

The 2023 Red List Index, which tracks aggregate extinction risk as SDG Indicator 15.5.1 as well as a headline indicator for Goal A of the new Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, incorporate recent comprehensive new assessments of all amphibian species, but, worryingly, now reveals deteriorations of 12% over the last three decades

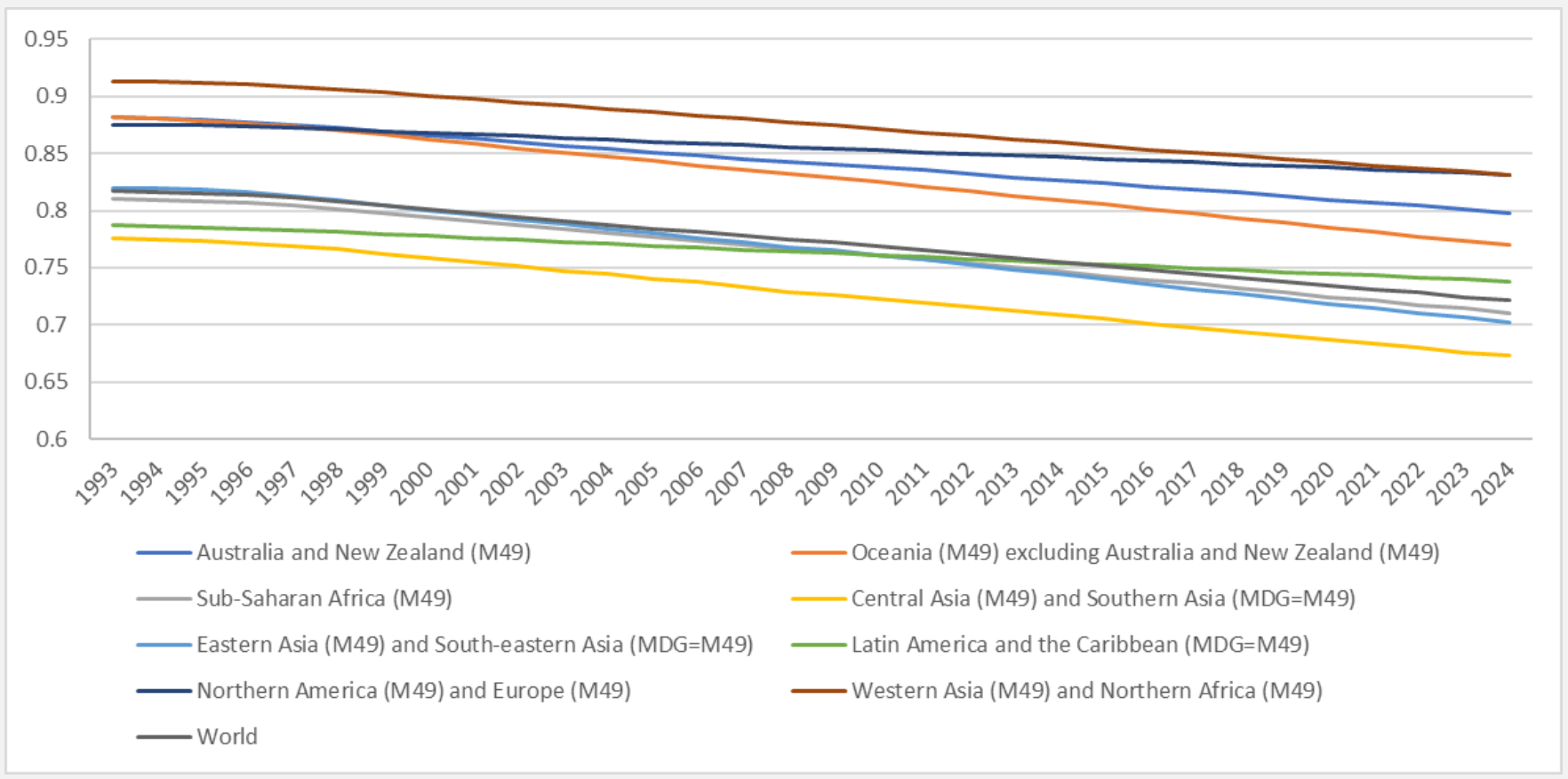
Major 2023 updates to SDG Indicator 15.5.1, the Red List Index, include the recently completed comprehensive re-assessments of the extinction risk of the world's amphibian species (more than 8,000 species re-assessments in total).

Worryingly, these new data points reveal that species extinction risk continues to increase, as evidenced by a 12% deterioration in the aggregate Red List Index since 1993. For amphibians, climate change impacts, habitat conversion, and alien invasive fungal disease are the drivers of most of these increases. As an example, the extinction risk of Buckley's Glassfrog, only found in the Ecuadorian Andes, has increased over the last two decades due to severe loss of habitat from expanding agriculture and livestock grazing, as well as likely impacts of fungal disease and climate change. It is now categorised as Critically Endangered.. The Red List Index also remains geographically variable, with particularly severe deteriorations apparent in Central and Southern Asia, and in Eastern and South-eastern Asia.

However, there have also been some species that have shown signs of recovery over the period, with, for example, 120 amphibian species moving from a higher to a lower category of extinction risk, as a result of habitat protection measures in countries like India, Costa Rica, and Malaysia, as well as apparent stablisation of declines from fungal disease. An example is the Indigo Bush Frog, which lives in high-elevation forests in the Kudremukh Massif mountain range in India. In 2004, the species was Critically Endangered due to mining related habitat destruction, but a landmark legal decision to end mining in the area has safeguarded the species' habitat and it has now been reassessed as Vulnerable.

The Red List Index is derived from regular reassessment of every species within a taxonomic group (currently, all mammals, birds, amphibians, corals, and cycads) for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species; it equals 1 when all species are species are Least Concern and 0 when all species are Extinct or Critically Endangered (Possibly Extinct). The Red List Index also serves as a headline indicator for Goal A of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Red List Index of Species Survival, aggregated across all taxonomic groups included, for the World and regional disaggregations.



Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- IUCN Red List of Threatened Species https://www.iucnredlist.org/
- IUCN Red List Categories & Criteria https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/10315
- Buckley's Glassfrog Centrolene buckleyi https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/54908/85877086
- Indigo Bush Frog Raorchestes indigo https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/73787889/73787915
- Ongoing declines for the world's amphibians in the face of emerging threats https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-023-06578-4

Storyline authors(s)/contributor(s): Thomas Brooks, IUCN; Stuart Butchart, BirdLife International; Janice Chanson, Re:wild; Kate Harding, IUCN; Craig Hilton-Taylor, IUCN; Jennifer Swandby, Re:wild; Richard Jenkins, IUCN; Kelsey Neam, Re:wild; Tom Scott, BirdLife International; Simon Tarr, IUCN

Custodian agency(ies): IUCN

Target 15.6 Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed

Indicator 15.6.1 Number of countries that have adopted legislative, administrative and policy frameworks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits

New biodiversity deal draws renewed attention to the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources

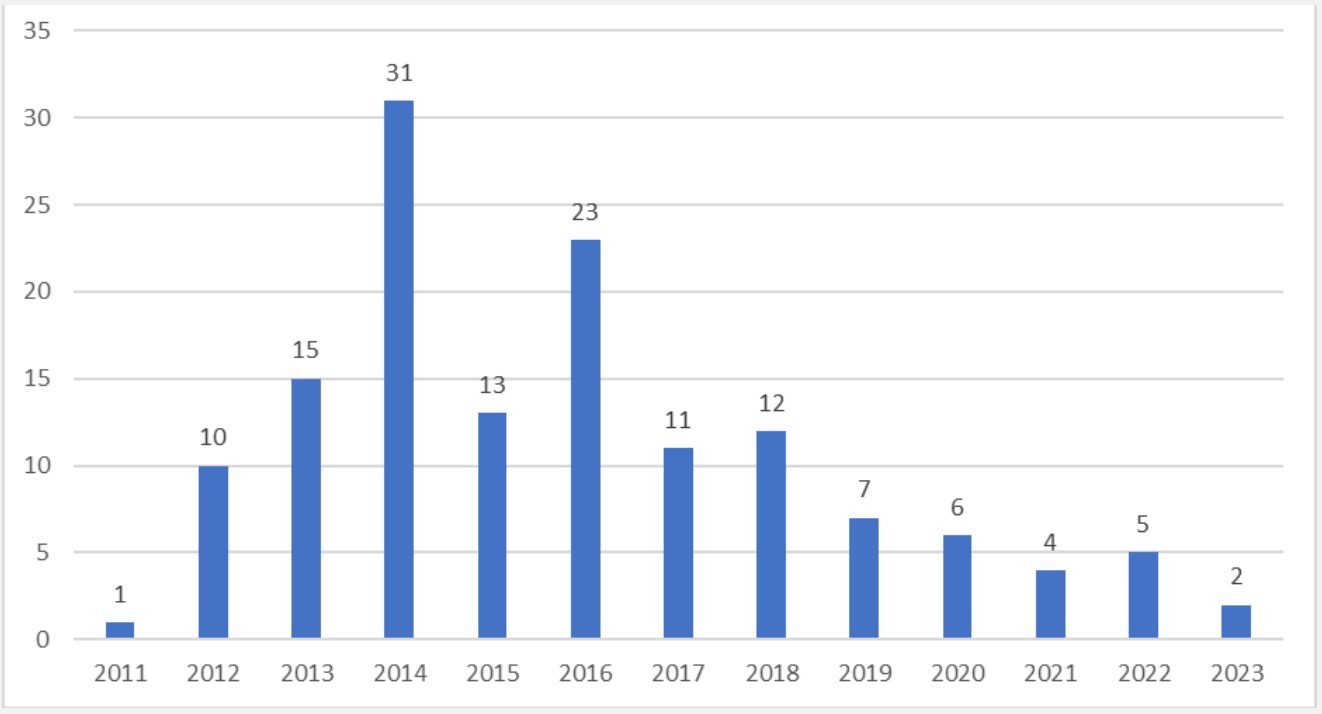
Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity celebrated the 10 years since its adoption, and the number of its Parties nearly doubled. At the end of 2023, 139 countries and the European Union had ratified the Protocol – representing 71% of all Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Two new Parties joined the Protocol in 2023. However, as the Protocol edges towards global ratification, many countries have yet to establish the necessary legislative, administrative or policy measures to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. At the end of 20232, 75countries had published at least one measure to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House and 26 countries had issued 5065 internationally recognized certificates of compliance (an increase of 625) as proof that prior informed consent was granted and mutually agreed terms were established for access.

With regard to the International Treaty, the number of its Contracting Parties has reached 151 at the end of 2023, including the European Union. By the end of 2023, 93 countries have submitted their national report to inform about their implementation of International Treaty's provisions, including on access and benefit-sharing measures, increased from 89 countries in 2022. The number of SMTA has been continuously increasing, reached 103 844 as at 31 December 2023, indicating more users are benefiting from accessing plant genetic resources for research and breeding.

During 2023, 28 projects have been approved under the Fifth Project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF) and the implementation is to start. BSF is the operational mechanism to share benefits arising from the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing of the International Treaty. It supports in particular smallholder farmers in developing countries and plays a catalytic role in international cooperation in management of plant genetic resources.

The adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in December 2022 in Montreal has brought renewed attention and impetus to the implementation of access and benefit-sharing frameworks. The development of access and benefit-sharing measures in accordance with the Convention, the Nagoya Protocol and the International Treaty as at the core of Goal C and Target 13 of the Framework. This provides an important opportunity to further improve data collection and analysis on the benefits shared from utilization of genetic resources, to accelerate global efforts to conserve and sustainably use genetic resources, as well as to enhance the mutually supportive implementation of access and benefit-sharing instruments.

Rhythm of ratifications to the Nagoya Protocol (World)



Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- The Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House: https://absch.cbd.int/
- The Online Reporting System on Compliance of the International Treaty on PGRFA: http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/compliance/compliance-reports/en/
- The Easy-SMTA of the International Treaty on PGRFA: https://mls.planttreaty.org/itt/
- The Benefit-sharing Fund: https://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/benefit-sharing-fund/landingbsf/en/

Storyline authors(s)/contributor(s): Beatriz Gomez, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; Aya Idemitsu, Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Custodian agency(ies): CBD-Secretariat

Target 15.7 Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products

Indicator 15.7.1 Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked

Global proportion of wildlife illegally traded increases sharply after the COVID-19 pandemic

SDG indicator 15.7.1/15.c.1 is calculated based on a measure of wildlife seizures as a proportion of the total wildlife trade. It uses a standardized measure to aggregate records of wildlife seizures and legal trade, which were originally reported using a wide range of different units of measurement. The indicator is calculated for CITES-listed wildlife only, as CITES provides a common regulatory framework internationally together with systems for data collection on legal trade and seizures of CITES-listed wildlife. The standardized measure draws upon import/export declared value data published by the US government, supplemented by UNODC wholesale price estimates for some commodities and market price information for plant species compiled by UNEP-WCMC. These values are static and are used only to construct an index that allows aggregation of diverse forms of wildlife commerce (comparing for example an elephant with a butterfly).

Reliable value estimates are only available for a sub-set of wildlife commodities traded. Furthermore, given the underground nature of illicit wildlife trafficking, the use of seizure data only accounts for the portion of illegal wildlife trade that is detected. Seizures provide some measure of illegal trade but also of enforcement and reporting effort. In addition, the listing of species on CITES changes over time. Therefore, caution should be practiced when interpreting the results. Despite these methodological challenges, the indicator provides useful insights into the latest trends in wildlife trafficking and trade.

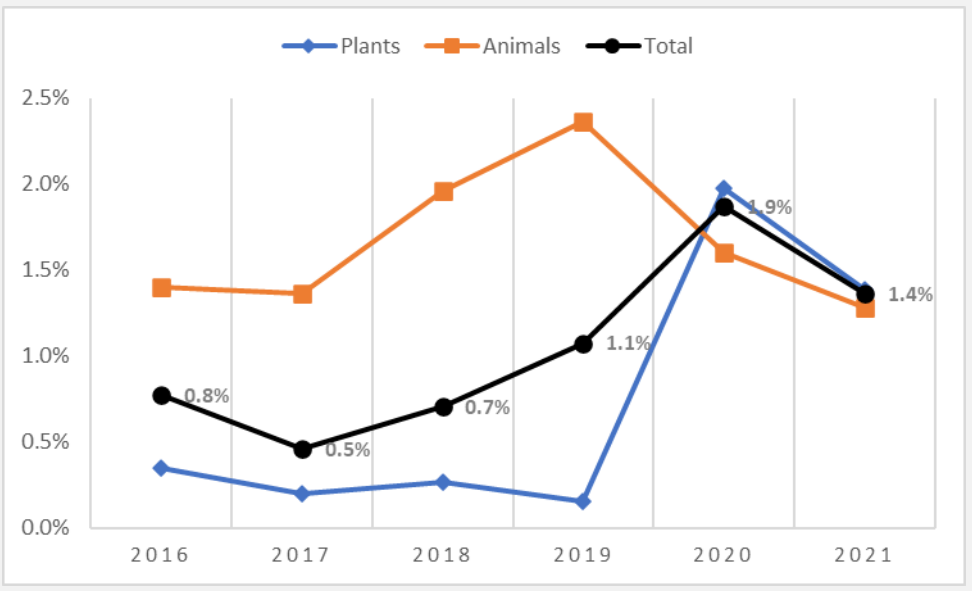
Estimates available for the first time show that global illegal wildlife trade (as represented by wildlife seizures) as a proportion of all wildlife trade (legal and illegal) decreased in 2017 with respect to 2016 and increased slightly between 2017 and 2019, before a sharp incline after COVID-19 in 2020-2021 to higher levels than those observed before. It is estimated that wildlife seizures made up over 1.9 and 1.4 percent of global wildlife trade in 2020 and 2021 respectively based on index values. This trend reflects an increase in the index for seizures in 2020-2021, accompanied by a decline in the index values for legal trade, especially in 2019-2020.

The increase at the global level in wildlife seizures in 2020-2021 responds mostly to new regulation (CITES-listing) of high-value timber species from South America and related enforcement actions resulting in seizures. Global trends in the measure of legal wildlife trade are heavily affected by trade flows in Asia, which made up 50-70 percent of global legal trade annually during 2016-2021. Most regions saw a decline in legal trade in 2020 followed by a slight recovery in 2021.

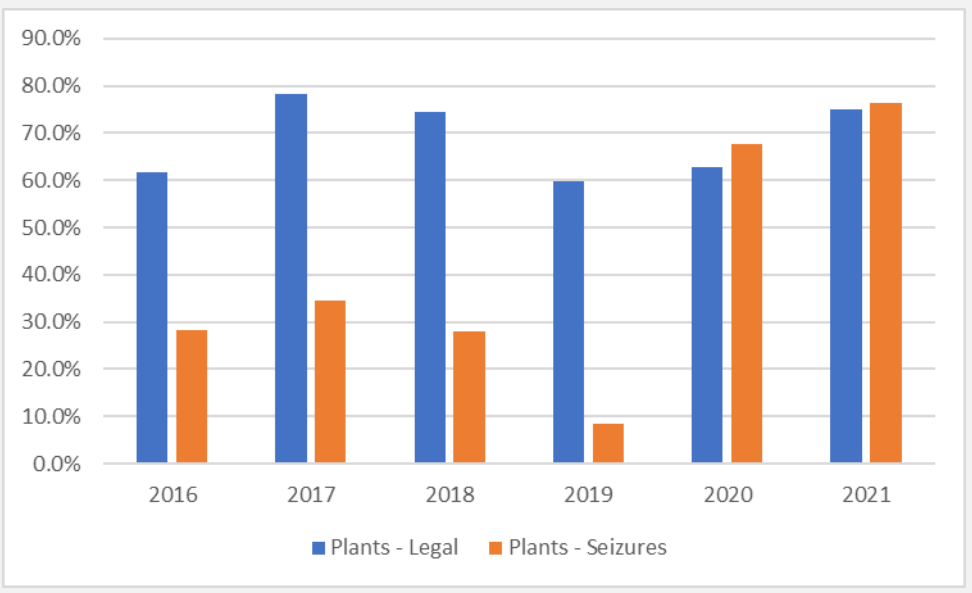
The global proportion of animals seized is notably higher than that of plants during the 2016-2019 period. The increasing trend of the global indicator is driven by a sharp incline in animal illegal trade as a proportion of all animal trade from 1.4 percent in 2017 to 2.4 in 2019. The seizures of animals products decreased sharply in 2020-2021, while seizures of plant products, especially timber in South America as mentioned before, greatly increased. As a result, the estimated proportions of intercepted wildlife illegally traded for plants and animals converged during 2020-2021.

During 2016-2019, the share of plant products in total legal wildlife trade varied around 60-80 percent, with 20-40 percent coming from animal products. In contrast, plants made up only around 10 to 30 percent of the global wildlife seizures during the same period of time, with over 70 percent coming from animal products. During 2020-2021, however, plant products represented about 60-80 percent of global wildlife seizures, a proportion similar to that observed in the global legal wildlife trade, suggesting that either illegal trade of plant-based wildlife has overtime increased as compared to legal trade or that law enforcement to seize plant-based material has increased, or both.

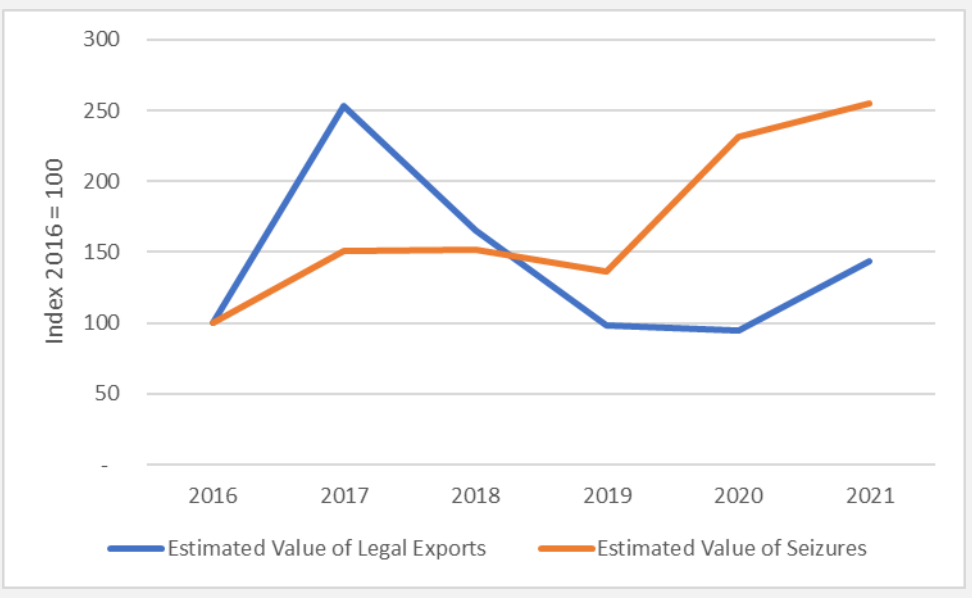
Proportion of the estimated value of wildlife trade represented by wildlife seizures, by total, animal or plant products, 2016-2021



Proportion of the estimated value of total legal wildlife trade and seizures represented by plant products, 2016-2021



Trend in the estimated value of wildlife legal trade and seizures, 2016-2021



Storyline authors(s)/contributor(s): UNODC

Custodian agency(ies): UNODC, CITES

Target 15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species

Indicator 15.8.1 Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species

Custodian agency(ies): IUCN

Target 15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts

Indicator 15.9.1 (a) Number of countries that have established national targets in accordance with or similar to Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 in their national biodiversity strategy and action plans and the progress r

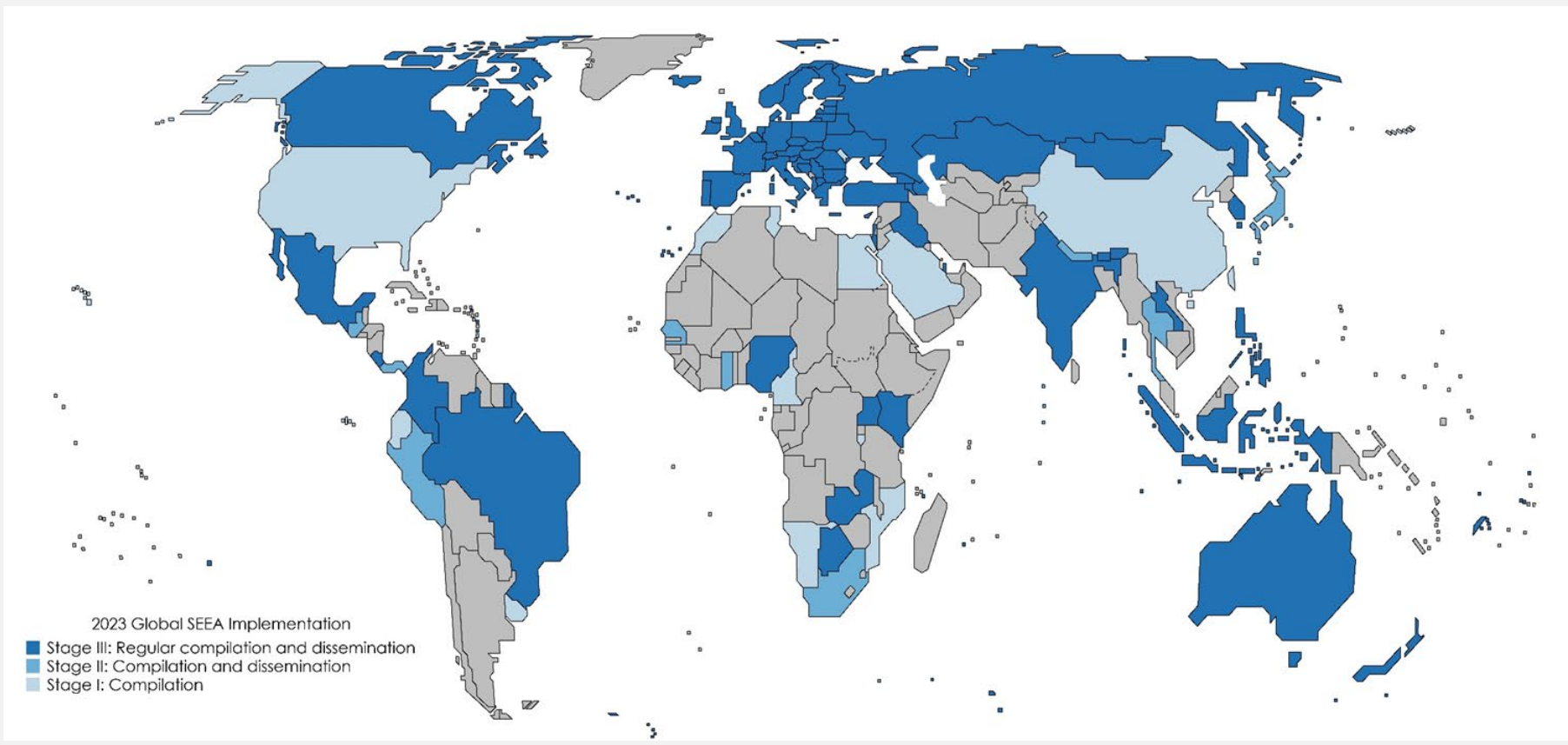
Growing efforts to build integrated information systems for biodiversity

As the world approaches the deadline of the 2030 Agenda, the urgency of addressing biodiversity and climate change crises has intensified. Countries are increasingly recognizing the need for comprehensive, integrated data on the relationship between the environment and the economy to tackle poverty while safeguarding biodiversity and climate stability. To achieve this goal, countries are moving towards integrating ecosystem and biodiversity values into their national accounting and reporting systems. A pivotal step in this direction is country implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), the international statistical standard for natural capital accounting. The compilation of SEEA accounts provides a way for countries to build integrated information systems which mainstream biodiversity and enviornmental conisderations into decision-making processes.

At present, 90 countries have integrated biodiversity values into their national accounting and reporting systems through implementation of the SEEA. This is part of an overall upwards trend in SEEA implementation and represents an increase of 30 per cent from 2017. In addition, 2023 also saw an increase in the number of countries regularly compiling and disseminating the accounts, which indicates that countries are making progress in mainstreaming and institutionalizing the accounts into policy and decision making. The 2023 findings also suggest that the pandemic's effects have been far reaching and lingering. In 2022, 92 countries implemented the SEEA. The decrease in 2023 is likely due to the lingering strain on resources placed on national statistical offices with the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, according to a global assessment on SEEA implementation, it is expected that the number of countries compiling the SEEA will increase in the future. In particular, a large majority indicated that they had plans to begin SEEA implementation in the future, with most of these countries located in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the SEEA provides the methodological basis for multiple headline indicators of the monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This is expected to provide further impetus to countries to develop SEEA accounts, particularly SEEA Ecosystem Accounts.

2023 Global SEEA Implementation



Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- Global Assessment of Environmental-Economic Accounting and Supporting Statistics 2023: https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_55/documents/BG-3h-Global_Assessment_2023-E.pdf
- Implementation strategy for the SEEA EA: https://seea.un.org/sites/seea.un.org/files/documents/EA/seea_ea_implementation_strategy_march_2022.pdf
- https://seea.un.org/content/homepage

Storyline authors(s)/contributor(s): Elsa Marcela Begne De Larrea, UNSD; Jessica Ying Chan, UNSD; Marinella Cirillo, UNSD; Ilaria Di Matteo, UNSD; Marko Javorsek, UNSD

Custodian agency(ies): CBD-Secretariat, UNEP

Target 15.a Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems

Target 15.b Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation

Indicator 15.a.1 (a) Official development assistance on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; and (b) revenue generated and finance mobilized from biodiversity-relevant economic instruments

Indicator 15.b.1 (a) Official development assistance on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; and (b) revenue generated and finance mobilized from biodiversity-relevant economic instruments

Biodiversity-related development finance reached a record level in 2022

In 2022, the members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) committed USD 9.8 billion in official development assistance (ODA) aiming at SDG 15a1 (on biodiversity), a record level since funding for biodiversity is reported. This is an increase of over 20% compared to 2021 (when it reached USD 8.1 billion) and of 49% compared to 2020 (USD 6.5 billion). The year-on-year increase in biodiversity-related development finance can be attributed to the renewed interest in biodiversity and development co-operation after 2020, when members started the process to agree on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which culminated in December 2022. The GBF replaced previous commitments by the Parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) - namely, the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity and its Aichi Targets- with a mission to 2030 and a vision to 2050.

While these ODA flows are prior to the approval of the GBF, they already reflect DAC member ambition on biodiversity and how bilateral providers of development co-operation are re-directing their attention to meet GBF Target 19 on international finance for biodiversity. Indeed, Target 19 calls to increase total biodiversity-related international financial resources from developed countries, including ODA, and from countries that voluntarily assume obligations of developed country Parties, to developing countries to at least USD 30 billion per year by 2030. Importantly, to reach this figure, multilateral development finance with biodiversity objectives would also need to be added.

Notwithstanding, these flows only increased by 4.7% compared to 2015, when ODA commitments reached USD 9.3 billion – which was another milestone in biodiversity circles (as CBD Parties were asked to double, as part of Aichi Target 20, their biodiversity-related international finance flows compared to a 2006-2010 baseline). In order to meet Target 19 and continue contributing to the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs, biodiversity-related development finance activities need to continue growing, both to meet conservation goals of the CBD, as well as by promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. This can be achieved through greater mainstreaming of biodiversity, the search of co-benefits with other key areas, like climate change, or by reinforcing 'do no harm' to nature approaches and with activities that reduce pressure on biodiversity (e.g. promoting circular economy activities, reforming harmful subsidies, reducing food waste).

Custodian agency(ies): OECD, UNEP, World Bank

Target 15.c Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities

Indicator 15.c.1 Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked

Global proportion of wildlife illegally traded increases sharply after the COVID-19 pandemic

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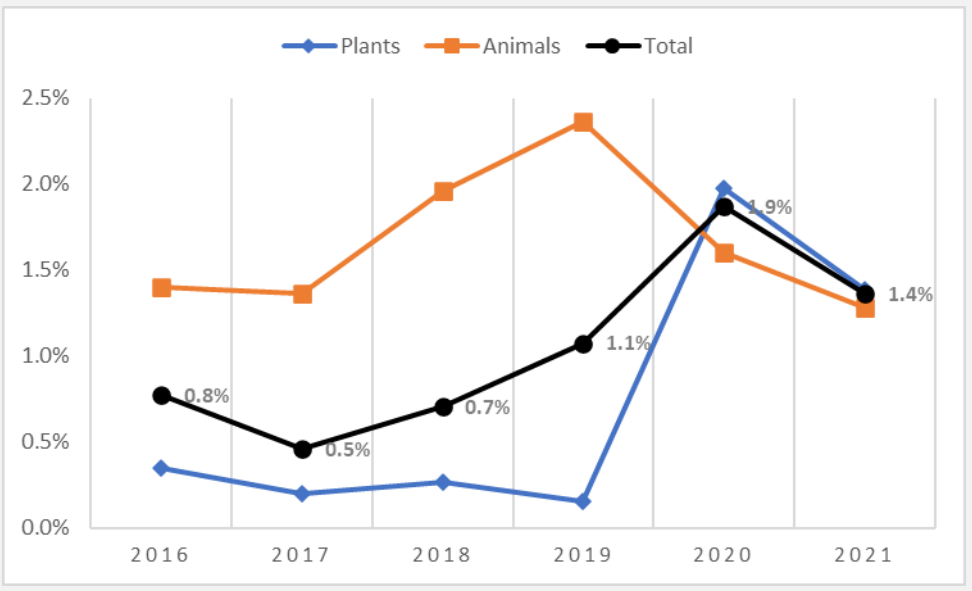
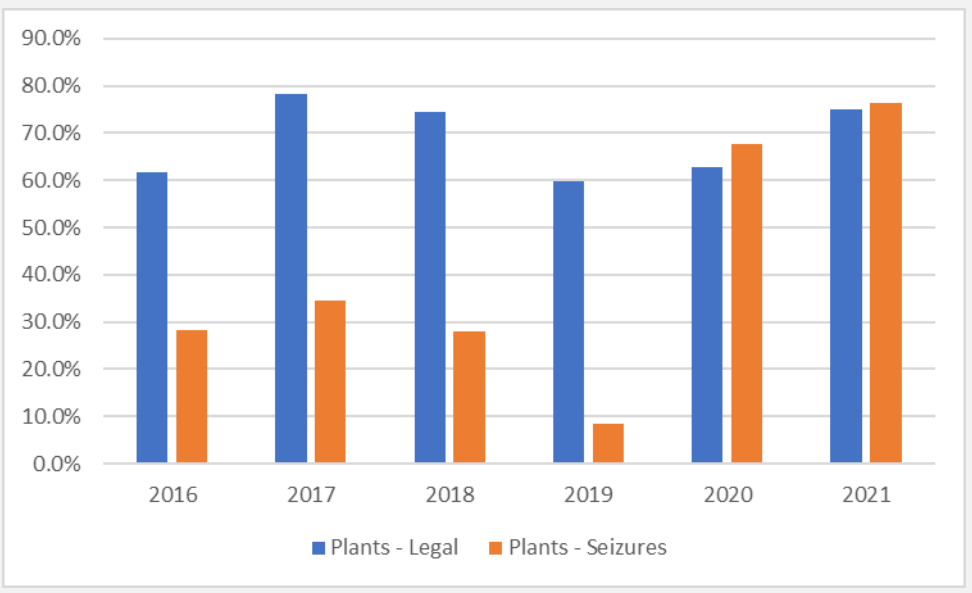
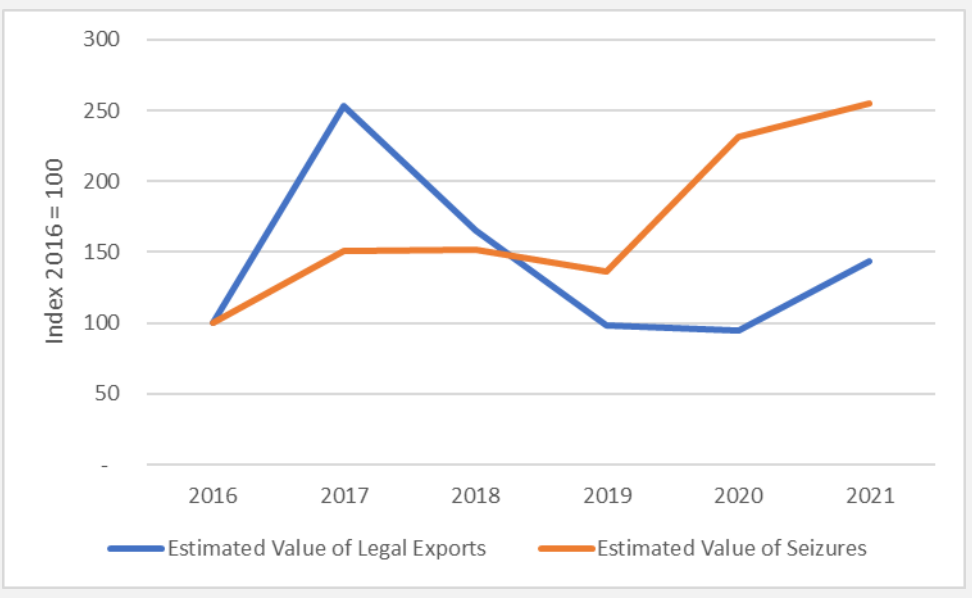
Proportion of the estimated value of wildlife trade represented by wildlife seizures, by total, animal or plant products, 2016-2021



Proportion of the estimated value of total legal wildlife trade and seizures represented by plant products, 2016-2021



Trend in the estimated value of wildlife legal trade and seizures, 2016-2021



Storyline authors(s)/contributor(s): UNODC

Custodian agency(ies): UNODC, CITES