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30x30: A global biodiversity framework target

SPC : Graham Pilling, Jerome Aucan, Anne-Claire Goarant, Pierre-Yves Charpentier, Sally Bailey

SPREP : Juney Ward

Introduction

1. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GDF) was adopted during the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) in 2022. The Framework builds on the Biodiversity Convention and supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Among the Framework's key elements are 4 goals for 2050 and 23 targets for 2030.
2. '30x30' represents the third of the 23 targets, aiming for effective conservation and management of at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine areas by 2030. It is not legally binding but serves as a strategic guide for countries when developing biodiversity conservation plans.
3. SPC, has received an increasing number of requests for sectoral assistance to support national discussions on marine spatial planning, driven by '30x30'. Through this process, SPC noted there were clear differences in the interpretation of the implications of this target at the national, regional and global level, and amongst different actors.
4. To enhance members' understanding of the status of the 30x30 initiative, its goals and implications, SPC has developed a Discussion Paper on the subject, which is appended to this IP. This discussion paper highlights key points that can be considered at national and regional levels when developing marine spatial plans and 'commitments' to global meetings such as the upcoming UNOC3.

Observations on 30x30

5. Key points are that 30x30 is:
 - A global conservation and management target for at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas by 2030. It is not focussed purely on marine ecosystems.
 - A strategic guide for countries who are developing their own biodiversity conservation plans. National targets may differ from the proposed global 30%.
 - Its aim is protection of biodiversity, so areas should be of 'particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions'.
6. 30x30 is **not**:
 - Legally binding on your countries.
 - A requirement that you create exclusion areas - no take zones or MPAs - containing a minimum of 30% of your ocean jurisdiction or land space.
 - The primary goal to be taken from the COP15 meeting. The COP15 developed global framework included four other goals and 22 other interlinked targets to be considered (and prioritised across) when developing biodiversity conservation plans.
7. There are effective alternatives to area-based management approaches for protecting biodiversity, especially when considering highly migratory species or marine genetic resources. Stock- or species-based protections can offer adequate alternative forms of protection to area-

based restrictions. The Global Biodiversity Framework defines Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) as ‘a geographically defined area other than a protected area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the *in situ* conservation of biodiversity...’. Global Biodiversity Framework Target 3 itself notes that the 30 per cent is ‘...effectively conserved and managed through ... protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures... while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation...’ (<https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets>).

Observations for SPC members

8. Given the importance of coastal and offshore fisheries to the livelihoods and economic wellbeing of PICTs, and the diversity of Member agencies involved in marine spatial planning and 30x30 within the Pacific, early engagement of fisheries departments within Member processes on this issue is recommended, to ensure the appropriate balance between the use of national resources with environmental conservation.
9. The mechanisms maintaining the current sustainable exploitation of the four key WCPO tuna stocks, combined with WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures and national plans for bycatch species (e.g. birds, turtles, sharks) may represent candidate MPA of category V or VI, or OECMs that preserve key elements of oceanic biodiversity. However, these are often not recognised or well understood by other actors. In turn, not all fishery-impacted stocks are in such a healthy state (e.g. oceanic whitetip shark, southwest Pacific striped marlin).
10. SPC FAME is increasing its human resources to deliver scientific advice to underpin Member marine spatial planning discussions. However, we continue to seek the longer-term sustainable funding needed to meet the growing demand for advice in this area.
11. At the wider SPC level, the Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity (UBPP) initiative aims to accelerate the implementation of the 2050 Strategy and the Global Biodiversity Framework through its three interlinked goals, emphasising the importance of:
 - Effective management and conservation of 100% of the Blue Pacific Continent,
 - Robust food systems underpinned by resilient ecosystems, and
 - Fit-for-purpose sustainable financing mechanisms.
12. Noting 30x30 is a global target, SPC and SPREP members might take a regional approach to that target. As noted within the discussion paper, appropriate sustainable financing mechanisms (e.g. through UBPP) may facilitate this.

Appendix 1. Discussion paper on 30x30

DISCUSSION PAPER ON 30X30

The Pacific Community (SPC) is the principal scientific and technical development organisation in the Pacific region. Established in 1947, it supports sustainable development through science, research, and technology. SPC's work spans over 20 sectors, including fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience, climate change and conservation of plant genetic resources for food security.

Pacific countries and territories have signed onto the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). In response, SPC has drafted this paper to catalyse discussions with its Members and sister CROP agencies through science, technical assistance, research and policy development. The 30x30 framework is designed to manage protected areas, promote sustainable use of natural resources, and enhance biodiversity conservation effort across the region. With SPC's broad capability and expertise, SPC is uniquely placed to provide objective scientific opinions in serving Members to inform policy discussions and implement 30x30.

The purpose of this paper is to support Pacific countries, CROP agencies and Pacific partners to discuss the 30x30 targets under the Global Biodiversity Framework, specifically how it relates to Pacific initiatives to conserve and manage biodiversity and opportunities to craft a contextualised Pacific regional approach.

Summary

- The “30x30” initiative is:
 - The third target of the GBF, which is a comprehensive framework to protect and restore biodiversity including 23 targets in total.
 - A global conservation target for effective conservation and management of at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas by 2030.
 - A strategic guide for countries who are developing their own national conservation plans. National conservation targets may differ from the proposed 30%.
- “30x30” is not:
 - Legally binding on your countries.
 - A requirement that you create exclusion areas containing a minimum of 30% of your ocean jurisdiction or land space.

- The primary goal you should take from the COP15 meeting. The COP15 developed global framework included four other goals and 22 other interlinked targets which you should consider (and prioritise across) when developing your conservation plans.
- The GBF aims at effectively conserving and managing areas to protect biodiversity. The areas protected should be of “*particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions.*”
- The GBF promotes area-based management for effective conservation and management of land, inland water, marine and coastal areas.
- There are effective alternatives to area-based management approaches for protecting biodiversity, especially when considering highly migratory species or marine genetic resources. Stock, or species, based protections can offer adequate alternative forms of protection to area-based restrictions.

Costs and benefits associated with 30x30 and conservation in general

- Sustainable financing and maximising benefits, including economic, social, cultural, and environmental from the use, management and conservation of countries ocean space and resources should be a critical part of any decision.
- It is important to consider the costs and benefits associated with conservation commitments noting that naturally the eyes of the world are on the Blue Pacific Continent when it comes to who can potentially provide the largest contribution to global marine conservation.
- There are a range of donors, providing funding to support conservation efforts associated with 30x30, including under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)¹
- Significant philanthropic funders operating in the region in this space including e.g. BEZOS Earth Fund and associated Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity (UBPP), Waitt Foundation, Oceans 5, BNA etc. These funding sources, including the sustainability of effort and benefits should be considered in the development of any related conservation commitments, particularly in the face of pressures on these resources and Island countries, from climate change, pollution, and extraction.

¹ The Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) GBFF support helps countries strengthen national-level biodiversity management, policy, governance, and resource mobilization, including blended finance to leverage private sector financing. The fund has a target of having 20 percent of its funding support led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Background to 30x 30

[Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(GBF\)](#) (“30x30”) was adopted in 2022 during the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). GBF has been endorsed by all Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and four out of five metropolitan states.²

Target 3 focuses on conserving areas of particular importance for biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services, while recognising the contributions of local communities and indigenous peoples. It replaces the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and aligns with the CBD.

Although not legally binding, the commitment serves as a strategic guide for countries to develop their national conservation plans.

The GBF represents an opportunity to rethink how we benefit from biodiversity. It is an opportunity to take stock of our national and regional use of natural resources and identify the most important areas for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services. It is an occasion to plan current and potential future options for conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Global Biodiversity Framework Target 3: Conserve 30% of land, waters and seas

“30x30” is defined as follow from the GBF:

*“Ensure and enable that **by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas**, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, **are effectively conserved and managed** through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of **protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories**, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that **any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.**”*

² France, the U.K., Australia, and New Zealand; the U.S. is not an official member of the CBD and thus did not endorse the GBF

30% by 2030 is a global target, not a national target.

The 30% referenced in the Target is a global target for effectively conserved and managed areas by 2030. Countries who adopt Target 3 commit to setting national targets for its implementation. National targets can differ from 30%. The global target can be addressed at a regional or continental scale to protect the most critical areas for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services.

Coordinated spatial planning across countries is essential to assure the global target is jointly met and to consistently protect areas with globally significant biodiversity importance while ensuring transboundary connectivity.

30x30 is one of many GBF goals and targets.

“30x30” is one target within the larger GBF which includes four goals and 22 other interlinked targets. Target 3 is part of a framework meant to establish a more harmonious relationship with nature and prosper with it.

Other GBF targets include the:

- Reduction of biodiversity loss (target 1),
- Restoration of ecosystems (target 2),
- Harvesting, trade and management of wild species (target 5 and 9),
- Biodiversity in agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry (target 10),
- Role of nature in contributing to people’s lives (target 11),
- Urban planning (target 12),
- Benefit sharing (target 13),
- Decision making (target 14), and
- Pollution and waste management (target 7 and 16).

Member states are encouraged to clearly set their own objectives and purpose when defining commitments and targets related to the GBF.

What does “Effective Conservation and Management” mean?

The Secretariat of the CBD defines “effectively conserved and managed” as:

“Protected areas and other effective area based conservation measures (OECMs) must be managed with the primary objective of achieving positive outcomes for biodiversity. Effective management and sustained positive outcomes for biodiversity conservation requires the adoption of appropriate management objectives and processes, governance systems,

adequate and appropriate resourcing and consistent monitoring. The protected areas and OECMs also need to be well connected through corridors to be effective.” (CBD Secretariat, 2024)

“Effective management” involves the governance of an area with biodiversity-positive objectives, with enforcement of rules and proper monitoring. Various activities may be carried out with a view to sustainable use, including limited types of non-industrial fishing if they are compatible with conservation objectives (CBD Secretariat, 2024).

The GBF refers to 3 different modalities to effectively conserve and manage areas:

- **Protected area:** *“a geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives.”* IUCN has established a categorization of protected areas.

Examples of protected areas in the Pacific include:

- Marine Protected Areas (MPAs),
- Protected Areas Networks (PANs), or
- large scale marine protected areas (e.g., Niue’s Moana Mahu, the Phoenix Island Protected Area, coral sea marine park in New Caledonia, Marae Moana in Cook Islands or the Palau National Marine Sanctuary).

- **Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs):** *“a geographically defined area other than a protected area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values.”*

Examples of OECMs in the Pacific include:

- Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs),
- Areas under community-based fisheries management,
- Traditional governance of coastal waters and associated practices such as ‘bul’, ‘tabu’, ‘qoliqoli’, or ‘ra’ui’, or
- Sacred sites and community-declared conservation areas.

- **Indigenous and traditional territories:** *“areas with unique and significant biodiversity owned, occupied or managed by indigenous or local communities.”* Most OECMs in the Pacific are occurring on indigenous and traditional territories, and this could more generally refer to existing customary marine tenure systems in the region.

For each modalities, specific attention needs to be given to **Areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services**: *“Areas particularly important for biodiversity include areas high in species richness or threatened species, threatened biomes and habitats, areas with particularly important habitats and areas that are important for the continued provision of ecosystem functions and services. The protection of such areas should be prioritised in reaching this target.”*

Classification of marine protected areas (MPA)

There are categories used to classify protected areas in a system developed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This categorization method is recognised on a global scale by national governments and international bodies such as the United Nations and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Pacific island countries and territories are free to establish their own additional categories for their own use.

The IUCN categories of MPA are :

- I.
 - a) Strict nature reserve:
 - b) Wilderness area
- II. National park:
- III. Natural monument or feature:
- IV. Habitat/species management area:
- V. Protected landscape or seascape:
- VI. Protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources:

UNEP-WCMC (World Conservation Monitoring Center) is the specialist biodiversity centre of UNEP and has responsibility for biodiversity assessment, support to international conventions such as the CBD and support to policy development and implementation. They are attributing categories to MPA as submitted by member through their regional focal point at SPREP.

Alternative effective management approaches

Several other measures are effective as a complement to area-based management, especially for highly migratory species or marine genetic resources. These measures include Species-based Management and Joint management areas.

Species-based management

Tuna fisheries management in the Western and Central Pacific Region through the Parties to the Nauru Agreement is a good example of effective species-based management. Pacific tuna fisheries management is not area-based, but stock or species-based.

Migratory species-based management, spanning multiple countries, relies on strong governance institutions, utilising the best available scientific evidence to inform members of the sustainability of fisheries activity. Species-based management relies on an enforcement capacity with clear rules and penalties for offenders in rigorous compliance monitoring processes. The four main species within the Pacific tuna fisheries are considered effectively managed and are all in a healthy state.

Another example of migratory species-based conservation and management in the region is the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Species Programme (Marine Species Programme, or PIRMSP) is a regional strategy for the cooperative conservation and management of dugongs, marine turtles, whales and dolphins, sharks and rays, and seabirds.

Joint management areas

Joint Management Areas (JMA) are an emerging approach for effective management of Extended Continental Shelf (ECS) in the Pacific and globally.

Seabed and subsoil of ECS can be jointly managed by neighbouring governments such as in the Mascarene Plateau case (Mauritius and Seychelles). This type of joint management is envisaged for the Melanesian Border Plateau ECS between the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and Vanuatu.

The recent adoption of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement under UNCLOS (19 June 2023) is paving the way for the establishment of MPAs in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ). The Agreement defines an area-based management tool to establish MPAs in ABNJs under its Conference of the Parties.

Towards a 100% effectively managed Blue Pacific Continent

The GBF is coherent with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, especially the Ocean and Environment thematic area and its related outcomes.

[The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent](#) emphasises:

- The importance of the stewardship of the Blue Pacific Continent,
- The protection of sovereignty and jurisdiction over maritime zones and resources, and
- The ownership and management of resources.

The ambition of the [Ocean and Environment](#) thematic area of the Strategy is for Pacific peoples to live in a sustainably managed Blue Pacific Continent, while steadfastly maintaining resilience to threats to

our environment. Several Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) have committed to effectively manage 100% of their marine environment and/or terrestrial environment.

[The Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity](#) (UBPP) initiative is aiming at accelerating the implementation of the 2050 Strategy and the GBF through its three interlinked goals, emphasising the importance of:

- Effective management and conservation of 100% of the Blue Pacific Continent,
- Robust food systems underpinned by resilient ecosystems, and
- Fit-for-purpose sustainable financing mechanisms.

Lessons from achieved and ongoing Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) processes in various PICTs (Cook Islands, Palau, Tonga, Kiribati, Federate States of Micronesia, Niue, Samoa, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Fiji) showed the value of consultative and inclusive MSP considering all ocean uses and users, with focus on balancing the use of natural resources with environmental conservation. Defining an MSP governance scheme within a country and identifying clear objectives to meet are key to an efficient implementation. It also shows that consultative MSP processes take time and must apply an iterative approach. Policies need to be adaptive to new uses, maintain resilience to threats and plan activities in anticipation to climate change impacts.

The conduct of a stocktake of national contributions to the CBD and other commitments to effective management in the Pacific is desirable. SPC is seeking members support to work with SPREP and other partners to map and quantify the current percentage of managed marine areas (i.e. subjected to full protection and OECM) in PICTs and further analyse biodiversity and human activities in relevant ABNJs. Other frameworks on biodiversity conservation or sustainable use of resources could be considered.

[An additional contribution to marine spatial planning: Ecologically or biologically significant marine areas \(EBSAs\)](#)

EBSAs are “special places in the world’s ocean” as defined by the UN CBD. It relies on a set of seven scientific criteria to identify open ocean waters and deep-sea habitats in need of protection. These criteria and the further defined process to identify and describe EBSAs can support the zoning decision in MSP processes.

[EBSAs are catalogued and available](#) to support planning and management with the most advanced science and knowledge available. This is the result of over eight years of negotiations touching upon delicate political matters relating to the law of the sea (UNCLOS). The modalities are expected to make a crucial contribution to the implementation not only of CBD and the GBF (the 30x30 protected areas target) but also of the BBNJ Agreement.

Sustainable financing and leveraging benefits

The CBD and its associated decisions and targets like the 30x30 have dedicated sources of funding to support developing countries implement some of these commitments. For the CBD, this is primarily the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF). Each country has an allocation based on its ability to support global environmental benefits. Ideally in this context, as it relates to achieving the 30x30 goal in the ocean space, the Pacific should be at the front of the line by way of funding for any ocean conservation commitments.

A number of bilateral donors and philanthropy also invest significantly in ocean conservation efforts. These are often driven by their own interests in achieving certain metrics, so it is important to ensure that any of these sources are well understood before establishing a partnership. The UBPP is a good example of the region ensuring that the largest philanthropic partner interested in financing is truly aligned with the priorities of PICTs. It also underpins a consultative process to define what the region considers as measurable contributions towards a regional 30x30 commitment, as is being proposed under the UBPP goal 1.

There are several examples in the region of countries and sub-regions developing fit-for-purpose sustainable financing mechanisms to harness some of these resources and raise revenues to support ocean conservation, amongst other things, led by PICTs themselves. These are mixed in their successes, but all provide helpful lessons that countries might draw on when considering their own journey in this space. Some examples include:

1. The [Micronesian Conservation Trust](#) (MCT)
2. The [Niue Ocean Wide Trust](#) (NOW Trust)
3. The [Sovibasin Trust](#)
4. The [PIPA Trust Fund](#)
5. The [Palau Pristine Paradise Environmental Fee](#)
6. The Fiji Tourism levy and other examples