



## IUCN Submission to the Co-Chairs: Final Intergovernmental Consultations on Nature-based Solutions

The Intergovernmental Consultations on Nature-based Solutions planned in Nairobi between 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 comes at the right time following the integration of NbS in all Rio conventions, and other Multilateral environmental agreements. The consultation comes also at time when the Global Biodiversity framework have been endorsed by parties highlighting the need to accelerate action to halt biodiversity loss and safeguard nature.

IUCN commends the leadership of Co-chairs from Costa Rica and Nigeria and hereby shares key areas for the global consultation to consider.

- I. The International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN, recall the progress made so far as part of the journey to uptake Nature-based Solutions and commend UNEP and parties for the work done. The endorsement of the NbS definition by UNEA 5 under resolution 5.2 created a momentum to include NbS in all Rio conventions and many of the multilateral environmental agreements, thus **the global consultation should focus on means to catalyse accelerated High Integrity nature-based solutions actions to address societal challenges including climate change and biodiversity loss among others.**
  
- II. **Nature-based Solution Standard and criteria:** The opportunity to implement high-integrity Nature-based Solutions is strongly linked with standard setting, robust knowledge transfer, access to guidance for those implementing interventions, strong consistent assurance mechanisms as well as enabling policies at global, national, and subnational level. IUCN knowledge products are being used by parties to the United Nations sustainability frameworks for monitoring and reporting purposes, to increase uptake and minimize the reporting burden. Examples of these products include the Red List of Ecosystems and Red List Index, which are headline indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Similarly, The IUCN Standard offers the same pathway for the concept of Nature-based Solutions (NbS). Aligning with the UNEA definition of NbS in a strong and tight fit, the [IUCN Global Standard on Nature-based Solutions](#) offers a robust framework to enable the coherent design, execution, and evaluation of Nature-based Solutions. The application of such a framework is essential to increase the scale and impact of nature-based solutions, guard against unanticipated negative outcomes or misuse of claims of alignment and help funding agencies, policy makers and other stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of interventions<sup>[OBJ]</sup>.

- III. The IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions is the result of a two-year consultation among scientists, practitioners, communities and other stakeholders with over 800 experts from more than 100 countries providing inputs to the content and development of the Standard. At IUCN's World Conservation Congress in 2021, the [motion calling for the promotion of the IUCN Global Standard on NbS](#) was successfully approved by an overwhelming majority of IUCN's 1400+ members, including states, government agencies, national and international NGOs and Indigenous Peoples Organisations.
- IV. The Standard is a multi-dimensional and versatile tool that can be utilized in many contexts; subnational, national, and global. The Standard is composed of 8 criteria and 28 indicators and is built on 8 overarching principles that can be applied at both macro and micro levels, for policy development and investment decision-making, as well as indicators that support maximizing the intended impact of the NbS interventions. Based on the above and noting the fit of the standard to the accepted Global Definition of Nature Based Solutions, IUCN invites the co-chairs and parties to use and apply this standard in the efforts to safeguard the integrity of Nature-based Solutions actions including applying the Standard at policy and financial architecture levels.
- V. **Nature based Solution for Policy:** Nature-based Solutions offers an opportunity to break sectoral policy silos and enhance cross sectoral collaboration to address multifaceted challenges and impact of climate change and biodiversity loss. NbS provide a framework for inclusive decision making and enhances actions benefiting nature and people. The [Integrating NbS into Policies for climate change and disaster risk reduction](#) reports highlight a cohesive way to apply NbS into policy design and implementation and offers recommendation to address this gap. IUCN commends the co-chairs for adding the topic on NbS policy on the agenda for the consultation. The opportunity for NbS to enhance sectoral coordination and collaboration across various regional, National, and subnational level strategies and policies is unequivocal. The momentum to considering NbS at policy level is now when many of countries are revising their Nationally Determined Contributions, developing and or Updating National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), reviewing National Adaptation plans (NAPs) and assessing progress made towards sustainable development goals. **IUCN offers robust tools to support policy development and revision for this purpose including technical capacity deployed to countries through Regional NbS Hubs across all UN regions. IUCN also offers a robust framework and approaches to assurance practices to safeguard the integrity and consistency of claims.**
- VI. **Case studies:** The required scale and impact of Nature-based Solutions will require knowledge and learning across the various actors including documenting case studies, business cases and foster exchange of knowledge. Over the last years, IUCN have published together with its members and commissions various knowledge products and case studies that could inform the required scale. These were developed using the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solution and have been assessed to ensure integrity of action and impact. [Towards Nature-based Solutions at Scale report](#) offers 10 case studies from China. There is a need to address global societal challenges with NbS interventions, in an integrated manner. An IUCN CEM<sup>1</sup> study coming out in December 2023 will be presenting in detail how Nature-based Solutions interventions have been implemented successfully in different geographic and ecological contexts, to address a variety of societal challenges. [23 case studies carefully selected have been assessed with the IUCN](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Commission on Ecosystem Management

[Global Standard for NbS](#), and will showcase how different types of NbS interventions, have addressed multiple societal challenges (climate change, biodiversity loss, food security, water security, disaster risk reduction, human health, social and economic development) in an integrated manner, in different geographic zones (Africa, Europe, South and North America, Asia, Oceania) and different types of ecosystems, while involving a whole range of stakeholders (policy makers, managers, private sector, local communities, Indigenous People).

- VII. **Nature based Solutions are cost effective.** Over the years, concerns have been raised about either or not NbS are cost effective. IUCN have consistently documented the cost effectiveness of Nature based Solutions including those addressing coastal, marine, and terrestrial ecosystems challenges. [The Roots of Hope White paper](#) by the mangrove alliance highlights the economic viability for mangrove Nature-based Solutions across the Indian Oceans as a great business case. IUCN refers to the recent World Bank published reports on Cost Benefit of Nature based solution for various ecosystems to reaffirm that these solutions are cost effective with unparalleled potential to address societal challenges at Scale. Some of these resources includes [The Gray, Green, Blue Continuum: Valuing the Benefit of Nature-Based Solutions for Integrated Urban Flood Management](#). IUCN commend the work done by the World Bank in producing a guideline on [Assessing the Benefits and Costs of Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience](#). The tool is available and can be used to help project developers in the design of cost effective NbS projects.
- VIII. **Nature-based Capacity Building:** The need for capacity building as part of taking Nature based Solutions to scale while ensuring its integrity is important. IUCN considers this as an important building block to effective implementation of Nature-based Solutions. To address the knowledge gap, the union have launched a platform for capacitating professionals in IUCN Global Standard for Nature based Solutions through the [IUCN Academy](#). The academy offers professional certificate training in nature-based solutions and so far, more than 300 professionals have undertaken the course. The platform can be extended to anyone with interests to learn and become more conversant about Nature-based Solutions and the IUCN Global Standard.
- IX. **Nature based Solution Finance.** IUCN recalls the UNEP report on financing Nature-based Solutions highlighting the need to double funding by 2025 and triple by 2030 if the global community want to achieve the set-out goals by 2030. The need for all stakeholders to actively work together will enable closing this funding gap. The private sector, the public sector and development funding will play a major role in mobilizing required funding. IUCN note that some of the untapped potential to mobilize financing includes leapfrogging innovative finance instruments such as Nature swaps, Resilience, and green bonds as well as other financing instruments and call for parties to build on best success models to scale up innovative sustainable finance mechanisms. There is a significant opportunity to shift harmful subsidies to investing in nature-based solutions which could catalyse more than 20% of required funding. On this matter, IUCN call for a collaborative effort between state, private sector and other non-state actors work together.

- X. IUCN is pleased to share below additional resources in line with the issues to be discussed for co-chairs consideration:

### Best Practice

- The [ADAPT project](#) is implemented by IUCN's regional office in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, is a regional project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The project, which began in November 2019 and will conclude in December 2023, focuses on nature-based solutions in the Western region. The overall objective of the project is to increase ecosystem and community resilience to climate change and environmental degradation in the Western Balkans. It is centred on Nature-based Solution knowledge, policy and planning, implementation and scale-up.
- [Restoring Ecosystems to Reduce Drought Risk and Increase Drought Resilience](#), is a global project funded by Austrian Development agency (ADA). The project supports national governments to better understand drought emergency life cycle and its management phases with a view to adopt appropriate nature-based solutions that will help communities to prepare, respond, recover from and mitigate drought.
- The [NetworkNature+](#) project (second phase of NetworkNature) is an EU-funded project developing and enhancing a multi-stakeholder partnership on nature-based solutions, creating an NbS community of practitioners, policymakers, businesses, and researchers. The platform contributes to the evidence base on NbS, case studies and relevant resources. IUCN EURO is highly involved in this project, leading capacity building across sectors for NbS multipliers.

### Resources:

- [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions: first edition](#) . a user-friendly framework for the verification, design and scaling up of NbS
- [Guidance for using the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions: a generic guidance that facilitates the user's interpretation of the Standard Criteria and Indicators and how to apply them.](#)
- [Core principles for successfully implementing and upscaling Nature-based Solutions](#): A critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the NbS principles to inform the foundation for the development of standards for the successful implementation of NbS.
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- A list of best practices of NbS in Mediterranean cities (many in Europe) is provided in the [IUCN First assessment of the IUCN NbS Global Standard](#) in Mediterranean urban areas. The analysis assessed examples of good practice in 18 Mediterranean cities in terms of the benefits of NbS and their contribution to societal challenges, using the criteria and set of indicators suggested by the Standard.
- The [Prototype database of international Nature-based Solutions case studies](#) report presents selected international case studies that have been analysed in accordance with the agreed prototype documentation framework and offers lessons learned that support NbS uptake and implementation going forward.
- [Towards Nature-based Solutions at scale](#) report: Through ten case studies, the report analyses existing interventions on NbS and offers lessons learned that support NbS uptake and implementation going forward.
- [Decent Work in Nature-based Solutions 2022](#): Co-developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), this report is the first in a joint global biennial report series that aims to fill knowledge and advocacy gaps on how transitions to a

green economy will affect the world of work, and of the role that NbS can and do play in creating employment, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable people.

- [“Nature-based Solutions for Climate Resilience in Humanitarian Contexts – A Sphere Unpacked Guide”](#) emphasises the value and co-benefits of NbS for resilience-building in humanitarian contexts and provides practical guidance for using the Sphere standards when implementing NbS to address societal challenges in humanitarian action.
- ENACT: [Enhancing Nature-based Solutions for Climate Transformation](#) - The ENACT Partnership works to accelerate collective global efforts to address climate change, land and ecosystem degradation, and biodiversity loss through high-integrity NbS.
- The [NbS in Humanitarian Contexts Working Group](#) convenes stakeholders from across the Friends of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (FEBA), the Environment and Humanitarian Action Network (EHAN) and the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR) networks.
  
- The [PANORAMA Solutions](#) platform allows practitioners to share and reflect on their experiences with inspiring, replicable solutions across a range of conservation and sustainable development topics, including nature-based solutions.
- [Guidebook for the Design and Implementation of Ecosystem-based Adaptation Measures in River Basins in Thailand](#). The guidebook aims to serve as a framework for developing, implementing and mainstreaming NbS for climate measures in river basins throughout Thailand. The project highlighted the need for tailored, sector-specific guidance to mainstream NbS at scale and better integrate NbS into policy across all relevant sectors.

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