

# Towards Sustainable Wild Meat Trade and Consumption

Exploring the role of trade policy to support target 5 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework



## State of Play

The rapid growth in demand, harvest, and commercial trade of wild meat has led to the decline and risk of extinction for numerous wildlife populations. This trend poses several urgent concerns: threats to biodiversity and ecosystem health, increased risk of zoonotic diseases, major impacts on food and nutritional security for millions of vulnerable people, threats to livelihoods and income security in the longer term for those dependent on wild meat, and the risk of losing cultural traditions associated with wild meat.

*In some rural regions of West and Central Africa, wild meat provides 80–90% of animal protein.*

Ultimately, the economic, cultural, and nutritional significance of wildmeat makes it non-substitutable. Thus, it is crucial to maintain its consumption and trade at sustainable levels for positive outcomes for biodiversity and welfare outcomes for those dependent on it.

## What drives wildmeat demand and supply?

Demand drivers:

- Population Growth: Increasing population boosts overall demand.
- Urban Preferences: Urban areas have a high demand for wild meat.
- Human Migration: Migration to forested areas for logging and mining increases local demand due to limited food availability.
- Subsistence-Level Communities: Rural communities depend on wild meat for their food supply.

Supply drivers:

- Increased access to remote areas, advances in technology and hunting capacity (i.e., weaponry and ammunition).
- Improved ease of transportation.
- Increased lucrativeness from commercial trade in the short term and livelihood dependency.

## What is the way forward?

Previous policy approaches have largely prioritized ecological and conservational ambitions. However, a more comprehensive approach is needed. Novel policy interventions that target the underlying drivers and associated sectors like agriculture, food markets, forestry, mining, and supply chains are critical. Similarly, empowering communities dependent on wildlife hunting through income diversification and education can play a crucial role in reducing unregulated commercial trade of wild meat. Trade and trade policy can be part of the solution.

## How is Trade Policy Relevant?

Trade policy can facilitate cross-border trade of sustainably produced wild meat to meet demand; provide affordable protein-rich foods to meet nutritional needs of subsistence-level communities; incentivize logging and mining companies to ensure food for immigrant labor to reduce hunting; establish trade-related safeguards and supporting services to help local industries diversify livelihoods. In central Africa, regional economic communities as well as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement can be leveraged.

## Menu of options for trade policy to manage unsustainable wild meat demand and supply.

1. Facilitating supply of wild meat from sustainably produced sources by
  - Developing a harmonized AfCFTA standard for commercial trade in wildlife meat, including defining “sustainable” wild meat, contextualized to each source country/species, clear production and harvesting practices.
  - Establishing private standards and certification for harvesting where administrative capacity is lacking.
  - Specifying HS codes for wildlife meat beyond the 6-digit level.
  - Reforming national SPS frameworks to align with international standards and principles.

2. Reducing subsistence demand by improving access, affordability of nutritious food through imports and boosting local production, in turn supporting livelihood and alternate income generation by

- Implementing trade facilitation measures to simplify import documentation procedures for food commodities.
- Addressing barriers facing small-scale agricultural producers, such as:

**High Input Costs:** Reducing tariffs on essential inputs, easing business regulations, and simplifying cross-border trade can support producers.

**Unfair Competition from Imports:** Safeguard measures can protect domestic producers from harmful import competition through import restrictions or duty increases.

**Lack of Supporting Services:** Enhancing trade in services, knowledge partnerships, and technical cooperation can provide necessary support services. A gender-sensitive approach is essential, as women play a significant role in the wild meat trade.

3. Regulating Hunting by Laborers in the Logging and Mining Industry by

- Including enforceable environmental sustainability and labor-related clauses in trade agreements to ensure food and nutritional supply from sustainable sources for employees in the logging and extractive industries.

## Citation and acknowledgements

UNEP (2024). Towards Sustainable Wild Meat Trade and Consumption: Exploring the role of trade policy to support target 5 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

This briefing has been developed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in the context of Trade, Development & the Environment Hub (TRADE Hub) project.

Author: Jayasurya Kalakkal (Consultant, UNEP)

Reviewers and contributors:

UNEP: Anja von Moltke, Joy Kim, Beatriz Fernandez, Niko Felix Single-Liertz, James Lomax, Julian Blanc; Chatham House: Tim Benton, Thiago Uehara; World Trade Organisation : Daniel Ramos; Convention on Biological Diversity: Markus Lehmann; CIFOR: Lauren Coad; WCS: Liliana Venegas, Juliet Wright, Krossy Mavakala, UNEP-WCMC: Neil Bruggess; Center for Tropical Research (CTR), University of California: Kevin Njabo; University of Sterling, Gabon: Kate Abernathy and Donald Midoko Iponga

We acknowledge funding from the UK Research and Innovation's Global Challenges Research Fund (UKRI GCRF) through the Trade, Development and the Environment Hub project (project number ES/S008160/1).



To learn more about UNEP Environment and Trade visit: [unep.org/explore-topics/green-economy/what-we-do/environment-trade-hub](https://unep.org/explore-topics/green-economy/what-we-do/environment-trade-hub) or contact: Beatriz Fernandez at [beatriz.fernandezhernandez@un.org](mailto:beatriz.fernandezhernandez@un.org)



To learn more about Trade, Development and the Environment Hub (TRADE Hub) project, visit: [tradehub.earth](https://tradehub.earth) or contact [trade@unep-wcmc.org](mailto:trade@unep-wcmc.org)