



BRIEF

The Summary for Policymakers of the IPBES regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa¹

1. What is IPBES?

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is an independent, intergovernmental body established in 2012, under the auspices of UNEP, FAO, UNESCO and UNDP. Its main mandate is to synthesize the state-of-the-art knowledge on biodiversity, ecosystems and their contributions to people, as well as the tools and methods to protect and sustainably use these vital natural assets.

IPBES has four working areas:

- **Assessments:** IPBES prepares global and regional reports on the state of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as on specific biodiversity topics
- **Policy Tools and Methodologies:** IPBES identifies tools and methodologies to use the results of assessments in policymaking.
- **Capacity Building:** IPBES identifies capacities and competencies required to work with IPBES, and to use its products.
- **Knowledge Generation:** IPBES identifies knowledge gaps and fosters closing them; IPBES itself does not conduct research.

2. What are the regional assessments of IPBES?²

In January 2015, the third IPBES plenary session approved the launch of four regional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services in terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, namely for Africa, for the Americas, for Asia Pacific, and for Europe and Central Asia. The overall scope of the regional assessments is to assess

- the status and trends regarding biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services and their interlinkages,
- the impact of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services and threats to them on good quality of life, and
- the effectiveness of responses, including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the National

¹ IPBES (2018): Summary for policymakers of the regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. E. Archer, L. E. Dziba, K. J. Mulongoy, M. A. Maoela, M. Walters, R. Biggs, M-C. Cormier-Salem, F. DeClerck, M. C. Diaw, L. A. E. Dunham, P. Failler, C. Gordon, M. W. Halmy, K. A. Harhash, R. Kasisi, F. Kizito, A. Mensah, L. Tito de Morais, W. D. Nyingi, N. Oguge, B. Osman-Elasha, L.C. Stringer, A. Assogbadjo, B. N. Egoh, K. Heubach, L. Pereira and N. Sitas (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. [] pages. (L-document)

² <https://www.ipbes.net/deliverables/2b-regional-assessments>



Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The overall objective of the regional assessments is to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services at the regional and subregional level (IPBES 2018a).

3. What is the African regional assessment?³

The Africa regional assessment is the first of its kind in the continent, and is a synthesis of the state of knowledge on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people. The assessment aims to provide the foundation for a meaningful dialogue across the full range of stakeholders involved in African development (African policymakers, all constituents of African communities, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders involved in environmentally sensitive investments and land-use decisions)⁴. It integrates evidence from a range of knowledge systems, including peer-reviewed literature, grey literature, and indigenous and local knowledge.

The African Regional Assessment covers five subregions, encompassing the following countries⁵:

Subregions	Countries and territories
East Africa and adjacent islands	Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, Reunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania
Southern Africa	Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe
Central Africa	Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe
North Africa	Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Western Sahara
West Africa	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo

The Africa regional (as all of the four regional assessments do) comprises of two documents: a technical report (so-called “chapters”) and a Summary for Policy Makers (SPM). The IPBES Member States negotiated the SPM at the Platform’s sixth plenary meeting (IPBES-6) in March 2018 in Medellin, Colombia⁶.

³ <https://www.ipbes.net/deliverables/2b-africa>

⁴ IPBES/6/L.4 : Summary for policymakers of the regional and subregional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa, p 9

⁵ <https://www.ipbes.net/deliverables/2b-africa>

⁶ IPBES/6/L.4 : Summary for policymakers of the regional and subregional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa



4. What are the thematic priorities and target audiences of the African regional assessment?

The African assessment thematic priorities⁷ include the

- Food-energy-water-livelihood nexus;
- Climate-related risks;
- Land degradation;
- Invasive alien species;
- Sustainable use; and
- Technological innovations.

The assessment pays attention to questions of equity, poverty reduction, rights, social relationships, economic contributions, spirituality and cultural heritage in its investigation of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and nature’s contributions to people. It further considers the impacts of trade and investment, along with the contribution of low-carbon, ecological and social transformations of the economy. Finally, the assessment seeks to understand policy options for decision-makers to manage biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people under different future scenarios.

5. Structure and key messages of the SPM

Based on the 580 pages chapters of the African regional assessment, the SPM summarizes the most important information from the chapters into 22 key messages, grouped into five sections and covering the following topics⁸:

- A: Africa’s natural assets are unique
- B: Africa under pressure
- C: Strengthening African transformation frameworks
- D: Africa has options
- E: The future we want – making it happen together

The following tables covers the SPM's key messages including related figures and tables, as well as correlated sections of the technical report {curly brackets}.

A. Africa’s natural assets are unique

A1. Africa is very rich in biodiversity and is the last place on Earth with a significant assemblage of large mammals. The continent has significant regional, subregional and national

⁷ IPBES/6/L.4 : Summary for policymakers of the regional and subregional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa, p 9

⁸ The IPBES assessments use four “confidence terms” in order to categorize the experts’ level of confidence in their findings consistently: “well established” (robust evidence and high level of agreement), “unresolved” (robust evidence but low level of agreement), “established but incomplete” (low quantity and quality evidence but general level of agreement), and “inconclusive” (low quantity and quality of evidence and low level of agreement).



variations in biodiversity that reflect climatic and physical differences, together with its long and varied history of human interactions with the environment. **Africa's natural richness, coupled with the wealth of indigenous and local knowledge on the continent, is central to, and constitutes a strategic asset for, the pursuit of sustainable development** (well established). {1.3.4.1.1, 1.3.4.1.2, 3.3.2, 3.4}

- *Figure SPM.1: Map of Africa showing subregions and ecosystem units of analysis*

A2. **Africa's rich biodiversity and diverse ecosystems generate a flow of goods and services that are essential in supplying food, water, energy, health and secure livelihoods for the continent.** These tangible and intangible assets **underpin Africa's economy and** constitute strategic capital for the pursuit of **sustainable development** in the region (well established). {1.1.4, 1.3.4.3, 1.3.7.1, 1.3.8.1.2, 1.3.9, 2.2.1.2, 2.4.1.1, 3.3.2.1, 3.3.3.1, 4.2.1.3, 4.2.2.4, 4.5.1.1}

A3. **The true value of biodiversity and nature's contributions to human well-being tend to be under-appreciated in decision-making processes in Africa,** in particular for non-material and regulating contributions. **Existing studies on the valuation of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people in Africa are few and limited in both geographical scope and the types of ecosystems covered** (established but incomplete). {2.2}

- *Figure SPM.2 Indicative lists of economic values of nature's contributions to people in Africa*
- *Figure SPM.3 Comparison of the number of published papers on the valuation of three different types of nature's contributions to people, by subregion and by ecosystem unit of analysis*

A4. **Africa has opportunities to fully realize the benefits of its rich biodiversity and to explore ways of using it in a sustainable way** to contribute to its economic and technological development (established, but incomplete). {1.3.7, 1.3.9, 2.2, 4.4.1.1}

A5. Ecosystems found in Africa are of great ecological, social, economic and cultural importance at the national, regional and global levels. Such **ecosystems are a source of immense genetic resources and knowledge** (established but incomplete). As a strategic measure to protect them, **countries have classified as protected 14.7 per cent of the continent's land and 2.5 per cent of the seas within national jurisdiction,** while some sites have been designated as important or for special conservation reasons. {1.1.3, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.4.1.1.5, 3.4.2.1.6, 3.4.3.1.5, 3.4.4.1.5, 3.4.5.1.6}

- *Figure SPM.4 Teff - example of an indigenous food crop*

A6. **Africa has important genetic diversity that reflects its unique and varied biological and cultural heritages,** and is the product of interactions with, and adaptation to, an ever-changing environment, and of exchanges with other cultures.

A7. **Indigenous and local knowledge in Africa underpins the way nature benefits people.** It is at the forefront of biodiversity conservation and is **critical to the African vision for a good quality of life.** It **deserves more attention from Governments and society.**



B. Africa under pressure

B1. Decline and loss of biodiversity, and the reduction of nature's contributions to people in Africa are having an increasing impact on daily lives and hampering the continent's socioeconomic development (well established). {3.1, 3.3, 4.2.2, 4.2.2.4}.

- *Figure SPM.5 Extinction risk of species occurring in and endemic to Africa and its subregions*
- *Figure SPM.6 Red List Indices of species survival for five taxonomic groups (mammals, birds, amphibians, corals and cycads) in Africa, weighted by the fraction of each species' distribution occurring within each subregion*
- *Figure SPM.7 Trends in proportions of Key Biodiversity Areas (specifically, Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas) completely covered by the Protected Area Systems (PAs) in the African sub-regions between 1900 and 2012*

B2. The various natural and human drivers causing biodiversity loss and decline in nature's contributions to people in Africa include the conversion of natural habitats into agricultural lands and urban settlements. Other factors include **unregulated development of infrastructure and human settlements; overharvesting of biological resources; introduction of invasive alien species; and air, water and soil pollution** (established). {3.3.3.3, 4.2.2.2, 4.2.1.4, 4.2.2.6, 4.4.4}

- *Table SPM.1 Key drivers of biodiversity change in Africa shown per subregion and ecosystem type*

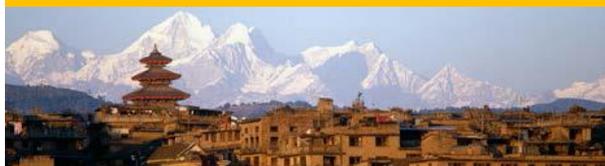
B3. Africa's current population of 1.25 billion is likely to double by 2050, putting severe pressure on the continent's biodiversity and nature's contributions to people, unless appropriate policies and strategies are adopted and effectively implemented. Africa is also **one of the most rapidly urbanizing continents** (well established). {1.3.7, 4.2.2.2, 4.2.2.2.3, 4.4.4, 5.4.2}

B4. Africa is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (well established). {1.3.3, 4.2.2.3}

B5. Land-cover change in Africa results in loss of the land's capacity to sustain biodiversity and provide nature's contributions to people. Unregulated conversions of forest (including logging) and rangelands for crop production, mining, urban and infrastructure development, among other human-induced changes, **have led to habitat loss, degradation of catchments and soil erosion,** leading to loss of biodiversity and livelihoods (established but incomplete). {1.3.6, 4.1, 4.2.1.1, 4.2.2.1, 4.2.2.3.1, 4.2.2.4, 4.2.2.5, 4.4.2.2.1, 5.5.1}

- *Figure SPM.6 Contribution of Africa's protected area network to the conservation of key biodiversity areas and species protection index*

B6. Marine and coastal environments, although of significant ecological and socioeconomic importance to the African continent, **are under immense threat from human activities.** Biodiversity and ecosystems in marine and coastal areas are diverse and **provide significant economic, social and cultural contributions to the people of Africa** (well established). {4.2.2.3.4}



C. Strengthening African transformation frameworks

C1. **Africa's unique and abundant biodiversity is an asset for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals** and can be sustainably and equitably used to **reduce inequality and poverty on the continent** (established but incomplete). {5.1, 5.7, 5.9}

- *Table SPM.2 Synthesis of the likelihood of achieving key policy targets, Agenda 2063 of the African Union Aspirations for a prosperous Africa, Sustainable Development Goals and targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets, under different scenario archetypes in Africa*

C2. The **achievement of the African Union Agenda 2063 Aspiration 1, for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, is dependent upon the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people** (established but incomplete). {5.7, 6.3.3, 6.6}

- *Figure SPM.8 Overview of the current and anticipated contribution of African countries towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets based on the fifth national reports submitted to the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity as of September 2017 (50 African States)*

C3. **Effective conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change** to keep global temperature increase in this century below the 2-degree centigrade mark and to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change (established but incomplete). {4.2.2.3, 5.4.5}

- *Figure SPM.8 Overview of the current and anticipated contribution of African countries towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets based on the fifth national reports submitted to the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity as of September 2017 (50 African States)*

C4. By implementing their respective updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans, **African countries are making some progress towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets adopted as part of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020.** The vision of this Strategic Plan and its targets is to value, conserve, restore and wisely use biodiversity, maintain ecosystem services, and thus sustain a healthy planet, while delivering benefits essential for all people. The **contributions of African countries to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets will be insufficient**, partly as a consequence of many national targets being significantly lower than those adopted for the globe (well established). {6.3.3}

- *Figure SPM.9 Summary of how effective global and regional agenda-setting combined with relevant decision-making tools can achieve desired future outcomes for Africa*

D. Africa has options



D1. Africa has a range of possible governance options for addressing the threats to biodiversity and nature's contribution to people including the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and its contribution to people to mitigate impacts of the challenges that the continent is facing (see section B above). The identification and **selection of feasible options needs to be facilitated by considering a range of plausible futures using scenarios and by providing an enabling environment for long-term planning** (established, but incomplete). {5.4, 5.7, 5.9, 6.3}

➤ *Table SPM.3 Examples of response options towards achievement of Africa's 2063 Aspirations*

D2. Africa's existing biodiversity policies, strategies, plans and programmes at the national, subregional and regional levels, are progressively addressing both direct and indirect threats to biodiversity and nature's contributions to people, and by ensuring inclusive development and a transition to green and blue economies in the context of sustainable development that are supportive of a good quality of life (established, but incomplete). {5.7, 6.2.1, 6.3}

D3. The establishment and effective management of terrestrial and marine protected areas and other types of conservation areas, including community and privately managed conservation areas, together with measures such as restoration of various degraded ecosystems and sustainable use of indigenous cereals and plants, has contributed to the recovery of threatened species, especially in areas critical for biodiversity. A key challenge for the management of protected areas is to find strategic ways in which to enable such successes, including benefits beyond species and ecosystems, building on what has already been done (established but incomplete). {3.3.2, 4.5, 4.5.1}

D4. Scenarios are currently only used to a limited degree in decision-making processes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Africa. In order to make scenarios more relevant for Africa, **collective efforts can build the capacity of African researchers, policymakers and institutions to understand and make beneficial use of scenario analyses** for intervention planning and informed decision making (established but incomplete). {5.1.1, 5.2.1, 5.2.2}

D5. African scenarios have been clustered into five archetypes emphasizing **market forces**, and **policy reform**, which represent in some ways a business-as-usual situation, and also **fortress world, regional sustainability** and **local sustainability**. The selected scenario archetypes provide an overview of how interactions between nature and society, or between current environmental and developmental conditions, existing driving forces, and optional management interventions, **could shape possible future trajectories of change across Africa in the coming decades**. {5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7}

➤ *Table SPM.4 Trends in the drivers of biodiversity loss, biodiversity, nature's contributions to the people and human well-being under each of the archetypes used to categorize the scenarios surveyed in Africa, with response options that could help to minimize some of the negative drivers towards achieving targets*

➤ *Box SPM.1 Overview of the scenario archetypes used to categorize the scenarios surveyed in this assessment*



E. The future we want – making it happen together

E1. **Africa can move towards achieving its development aspirations**, while improving the conservation of its valuable natural assets and meeting its biodiversity commitments, **through multi-stakeholder and multilevel adaptive governance, along with the improved integration of indigenous and local knowledge through recognition of traditional institutions** (hereinafter referred to as polycentric governance) (established but incomplete). {6.2, 6.2.1, 6.3, 6.4.5}

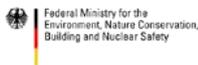
- *Table SPM.3 Examples of response options towards the achievement of Africa's Agenda 2063 aspirations*
- *Figure SPM.9 Summary of how effective global and regional agenda-setting combined with relevant decision-making tools can achieve desired future outcomes for Africa*

E2. **Governance options that harness synergies and deliver multiple benefits**, facilitated by an enabling environment, **can help to balance access to and allocation of ecosystem services in Africa** (established but incomplete). {6.3.3, 6.6}

6. Further reading

- IPBES website: <http://www.ipbes.net/>
- IPBES on the ValuES website: <http://www.aboutvalues.net/ipbes/>

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