



ESP Position Statement at CBD CoP16

Dear Madame Chair, esteemed delegates, and distinguished colleagues,

We are honored to address you today. As a leading voice in the development and integration of knowledge and policy, the Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) and the Young Ecosystem Services Specialists (YESS) together represent a network of over 4.000 experts involved in environmental accounting and ecosystem services science and applications on all continents. Since 2008, our Partnership has organized more than 25 international conferences, with the first Latin American and the Caribbean Conference held in Cali in 2016, addressing the theme of healthy ecosystems for resilient societies. In line with this work, the ESP and YESS communities are ready to contribute to the CoP 16, in crucial aspects like understanding the complexities of current socio-ecological challenges crossed by biodiversity loss.

1. Ecosystem Services: Accounting for better decisions

There are many definitions of ecosystem services, all of which the ESP endorses, as far as they reflect the ecological foundations of the concept, which places human agency at the core of benefits delivery, stewardship, and use. Target 11 goes far in incorporating ecosystem services and nature's contribution to people. We certainly celebrate and highly welcome such important advances in concrete ecosystem services applications, such as in Target 11, that help integrate ES and their values into the biophysical and sociocultural indicators of the GBF. Better accounting requires a better evidence base as well as robust and inclusive indicators to inform about trade-offs and synergies analyses, and better practices meant to improve, and guide, the direction of developments.

2. Plural Values Perspective

We therefore urge for more plural values and more comprehensive metrics and indicators. If the Global Biodiversity Monitoring Framework is to maximize conservation and restoration for all, it must consider plural indicators including, biophysical, geographical, cultural and monetary metrics and values. The use of plural indicators allows the assessment of how and to what degree policies are achieving:

- (a) conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services delimited by ecological thresholds,
- (b) trade-offs across ecosystem services and their distributive implications, and
- (c) the inclusion of the multiple worldviews and value systems of diverse actors at multiple levels.



Target 13 details on equitable access to benefits and the need for operational benefit-sharing instruments. However, methods and metrics most lacking in research and decision-making relate to these more plural approaches that include people in all their diversity. Therefore, we reiterate strong advocacy for consolidating the incorporation of both Indigenous peoples and local communities perspectives and value systems in legitimate and effective participatory processes. As such, we recognize that environmental sustainability necessarily implies incorporating diverse ways of living from, in, with, and as nature, as suggested in the IPBES value assessment.

3. Representation of Local Indicators

To ensure the delivery of scientific evidence supporting decision making, we call for reassessing the suitability of the indicators defined in current monitoring efforts to actually align with the principles -and broad values- of the GBF. To quantify nature's contributions to people, these measures should be place- and time-specific and framed together with the community receiving that benefit. Therefore, relying solely on national-scale socio-economic and political indicators will fail to address the connection between governance and successful implementation at local scales. The GBF requires NBSAPs, which in turn require regional and local strategies designed to allow indigenous and local perspectives for plural ES values.

4. Call for Permanent Monitoring Taskforce

As such, we recommend that CoP16 continues to prioritize evidence-based frameworks that emphasize the integration of ecosystem services and nature's contributions to people into NBSAPs. However, we must be wary of striped down indicators in monitoring and disclosure frameworks that lose sight of our interconnectedness with and dependance on nature. In this sense, it is imperative to build capacities to monitor the GBF in terms of analytical abilities, but also the skills, and motivation to bridge knowledge systems, to negotiate between conflicting perspectives and powerful interests, and to apply actions in real world governance systems. In developing the operational tools for the GBF, we call for a permanent task force under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to advise on the application of metrics across disciplinary, linguistic, cultural, and political barriers.

In closing, we urge all parties to implement the global consensus expressed in the GBF that the future of our planet's biodiversity and human well-being hinges on the effective and equitable management of nature and human-nature relationships. CoP16 must be a turning point—where policy, science, and global cooperation unite to safeguard biodiversity and nature's contributions to people for present and future generations. Together, we can achieve a sustainable and just world where Nature and people thrive in peace.

Thank you.

The Foundation for Sustainable Development-Ecosystem Services Partnership Delegation representing the Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) and the Young Ecosystem Services Specialists (YESS).

ESP The Ecosystem Services Partnership

Worldwide Network to enhance the Science and practical Application of
Ecosystem services assessment



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