

7th National Biological Diversity Report

Mains: GS-III - Ecology & Environment

Why in News?

India has submitted its 7th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), presenting a detailed national assessment of progress towards global biodiversity goals set for 2030.

What about the report and how it was prepared?

- **About** - It is the *first full progress assessment* since countries adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) in 2022.
- **Purpose**
 - It evaluates India's performance against 23 national targets aligned with the KMGBF.
 - It acts as a reality check on how far India has come since the global roadmap was adopted.
 - It provided a broad picture of policy alignment, measurable progress, data trends and gaps in India's biodiversity strategy.
- **Prepared by the** - Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- **Lead Agencies**
 - Inputs came from 33 central ministries and departments.
 - National Biodiversity Authority provided technical coordination.
 - UNDP, under the Global Environment Facility's GEF-8 Umbrella Programme, offered support.
 - The Wildlife Institute of India tracked progress on selected biodiversity targets.
- **Data & Monitoring Framework** - A digital NR7 data portal was created to compile information across 142 national indicators used to assess biodiversity progress.
- **Consultation Process** - Consultations with stakeholders were held throughout 2025, followed by expert reviews and validation workshops that continued into early 2026.
- **Institutional Significance** - The process reflects the development of a national institutional and technical framework for monitoring biodiversity outcomes.
- It strengthens India's ability to track, evaluate, and report on biodiversity commitments.
- **Global Biodiversity Roadmap** - The KMGBF sets out 23 global biodiversity targets to be *achieved by 2030*.
- These include
 - Conserving 30% of the world's land and seas

- Restoring degraded ecosystems
- Reducing pollution
- Controlling invasive species
- Halting human-induced species extinction.
- **Importance of India's Role** - India is one of the world's megadiverse country, with ecosystems ranging from the Himalayas to mangroves and tropical forests.
- Its biodiversity performance has a substantial influence on global outcomes.
- **Contribution to Global Assessments** - Data from the report will feed into international assessments examining
 - Whether the world is on track to meet biodiversity commitments and
 - Identifying any gaps in monitoring systems and governance that could affect long-term conservation efforts.
- **Policy Alignment & Strategy** - India has updated its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) so that it fully aligns with the KMGBF.
- The revised framework included 23 national biodiversity targets and 142 indicators, forming part of a national biodiversity monitoring system.
- **Stakeholder Involvement** - The process involved consultations with a wide range of groups including Indigenous communities, women's groups, youth representatives, local governments, non-governmental organisations and private sector actors.

What are the key findings of the report?

- **Current Status** - India has largely completed the planning & policy alignment phase of its biodiversity commitments.
- But alignment alone does not guarantee success, the real challenge lies in implementation over the rest of the decade, whether the country meets its 2030 biodiversity goals.
- **National Biodiversity Target 1 (NBT1)** - Biodiversity-inclusive land and sea-use planning (steady progress).
 - **Forest and tree cover** - 827,357 sq km (25.17% of India's geographical area), increase of 1,445.81 sq km between 2021 and 2023.
 - **Wetland inventories** completed nationwide.
 - **Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans** underway in coastal states.
 - **Eco-sensitive zones** have been notified around most protected areas.
 - **PARIVESH 2.0** digital clearance platform streamlines environmental approvals, which integrates several regulatory processes.
- **Institutionalisation of Planning Tools** - Together, these measures indicate that spatial planning tools and ecosystem mapping are becoming more institutionalised within government systems.
- **Remaining Uncertainty** - Despite these advances, the report does not quantify whether these planning mechanisms have reduced habitat fragmentation outside protected areas.
- **National Biodiversity Target 2 (NBT2)** - Focuses on ecosystem restoration, the report provided mixed findings.
 - **Desertification & Land Degradation Atlas** - About 29.77% of India's geographical area (roughly 97 million hectares) is currently undergoing

- degradation.
- **Bonn Challenge Pledge** - India aims to restore 26 million hectares by 2030, the report states that 24.1 million hectares have already been restored or are under restoration.
 - **Forest carbon stock** - It has increased to 7,285.5 million tonnes (rise of about 81.5 million tonnes).
 - **Mangrove cover** - It has increased modestly.
 - **Bamboo cover** - The area expanded by 1,540 sq km.
 - **Concerns** - Nearly a third of India's land continues to experience degradation.
 - This suggests that while restoration activities are taking place, new degradation may be occurring simultaneously.
 - **Measurement Issue** - Different methods are used to measure degraded land, which makes it harder to determine the true scale of progress.
- **National Biodiversity Target 3 (NBT3)** - Addressed conservation across land, inland waters and marine ecosystems, in line with the global "30x30" goal of conserving 30% of the planet by 2030.
 - **Protected Areas** - Currently cover just over 5% of India's area & additional forest categories contribute to broader conservation coverage.
 - **Marine protected areas & OECMs** - It has also increased, and the government is identifying Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECM) outside the formal protected area system.
 - **Gap** - Report does not clearly confirm if India can reach 30% conservation coverage by 2030, suggesting significant expansion is still needed.
 - **National Biodiversity Target 4 (NBT4)** - Focuses on species recovery.
 - **Flagship Successes** - India's *tiger* population stands at 3,167, reflecting continued recovery.
 - Numbers of *Asiatic lions* have also increased, while *one-horned rhinoceros populations* remain stable or are growing.
 - **New Assessments** - For the first time, the country has carried out a national assessment of *snow leopard populations*, and conservation breeding programmes for *vultures* are ongoing.
 - **Data Gaps** - Limited data on lesser-known species and other taxa, making broader biodiversity trends unclear.
 - **Agriculture and ecosystems**
 - **Integration with Agriculture** - Biodiversity is being incorporated into production landscapes.
 - Trees outside forests (TOF) now make up a significant share of India's total tree cover, while agroforestry occupies about 8.65% of the country's geographical area.
 - **Climate-Linked Gains** - Expansion of mangroves and rising forest carbon stocks contribute to climate-related biodiversity gains.
 - **Data Gaps in Agriculture** - The report provides limited quantitative analysis on pesticide reduction and nutrient runoff, both of which play an important role in biodiversity loss within agricultural ecosystems.

What are the key challenges?

- **Complexity of Monitoring** - Monitoring biodiversity is complex and expensive, and

several new indicators still lack standardised protocols.

- Different ministries collect data at varying intervals, while rapid improvements in satellite technology can make comparisons across years difficult.
- **Data Consistency Issues** - These factors can affect the consistency of datasets and the long-term comparability of trends.
- **Structural Challenges** - Biodiversity data is still scattered across multiple departments, and there are no uniform methods yet for measuring several of the newer indicators.
- Data is also collected at different time intervals, making it difficult to track trends consistently.
- **Capacity & Climate Pressures** - Limited financial and technical capacity, as well as the growing impacts of climate change, increasing floods, droughts and forest fires are already affecting ecosystems across the country.

Will India meet its targets?

- **Overall Progress** - India's report suggests that while the country has made measurable progress in certain areas, significant challenges remain in meeting the full set of biodiversity targets by 2030.
- **Targets on Track** - Of the 23 national biodiversity targets, only two, NBT1 (biodiversity-inclusive land and sea-use planning) and NBT2 (ecosystem restoration), are clearly identified as being on track.
- For most of the remaining targets, the report focuses on policies, programmes and ongoing initiatives, rather than providing clear projections on whether they will be achieved by the end of the decade.
- **Strengths & Weaknesses** - India has developed a stronger policy and monitoring framework for biodiversity conservation.
- It also acknowledges continuing pressures on ecosystems, including land degradation and biodiversity loss outside protected areas.

Reference

[Down to Earth | India submits 7th biodiversity report](#)

