

Towards a multidimensional biodiversity index (MBI)

The issue

Over 100 indicators have been developed to measure individual or aggregated facets of biodiversity and/or monitor progress towards internationally-agreed targets and goals. Yet these measure single facets of biodiversity such as species abundance, extinction risk or ecosystems intactness. Having no overarching picture is confusing, often leads to inaction and hampers our capacity to reverse biodiversity loss. Also, no index also relates biodiversity to human development as the sustainable development goals (SDGs) require.

The response

In partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), the Luc Hoffmann Institute is incubating the idea of transforming how biodiversity is integrated into decision-making globally. The aim is to stimulate greater, measurable action to safeguard biodiversity. Learning from the successes and failures of economic and poverty indices, the institute has brought diverse voices together to lay the foundations for the concept of a multidimensional biodiversity index (MBI) and raise awareness of its potential.

The MBI will focus not on individual facets of biodiversity or on providing a measure of performance against a particular target, but rather on a 'big picture' framework to help inform effective biodiversity action in policy and practice. It will provide governments with a single framework that answers several questions: What is a country's overall biodiversity performance? Are we effectively preserving the fundamental assets or benefits that we rely on for sustainable development and a healthy population? Are we reducing the main threats to and sources of biodiversity loss? What have we achieved in relation to our policies on biodiversity goals and objectives? The index and its headline will be annually replicable to focus on overall trends rather than absolute numbers.

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