

## How can Key Biodiversity Areas be useful for governments?



Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are sites of importance for the global persistence of biodiversity. They are identified using a standard set of 11 criteria based on scientifically-derived thresholds. Sites that are KBAs have a globally significant proportion of a population of one or more species, or a globally significant amount of an ecosystem or site of ecological integrity. The criteria and thresholds were developed through several years of consultation in the conservation community and are published as an [IUCN standard](#). The KBA criteria can be applied to all species or ecosystems in terrestrial, freshwater, marine and subterranean realms. As a result, KBAs provide a standardised method for identifying globally important sites for biodiversity conservation that can be applied in all countries and biomes, and are a critical tool for conservation management and site-based decision-making.

KBAs are identified nationally, bringing together data and expertise from within a country and where necessary from external experts. The designation of a site as a KBA does not prescribe how it should be managed, but site managers are urged to implement management that ensures the stability, integrity, or increase of the species or ecosystem that triggers KBA status. Countries are encouraged to establish KBA National Coordination Groups to oversee the process of identifying, delineating, monitoring and promoting the conservation of KBAs. The degree to which KBAs are covered by protected areas or 'other effective area-based conservation measures' is an official indicator for Sustainable Development Goals 14.5 (for marine KBAs), 15.1 (terrestrial and freshwater KBAs) and 15.4 (mountain KBAs), and for Aichi Target 11 in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, for several other international conventions (e.g. the Ramsar convention on wetlands, and various daughter agreements under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild animals); it has also been proposed as an indicator for Target 2 of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework being negotiated through the Convention on Biological Diversity and to be adopted in 2021.

Governments will benefit from using KBAs because:

- KBAs are recognised by international conventions as important sites for biodiversity
- Coverage of KBAs by protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures is an indicator used by various international processes and agreements, including under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- KBAs are being used by governments to guide strategic expansion of protected area networks
- KBAs can guide conservation priority setting

- KBAs identify the sites for which a country has a global responsibility for conservation (recognising that additional sites may be nationally important)
- KBAs provide a standardised approach to assessing sites of importance for biodiversity across the world
- KBA status is guiding conservation funding and support to sites
- KBAs can be used by governments when engaging with the private sector on planning and risk mitigation.

To find out more visit [www.keybiodiversityareas.org](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org).