



Convention on
Biological Diversity



Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 Country Dossier: AFGHANISTAN

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GLOSSARY

AZEs	Alliance for Zero Extinction sites
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GD-PAME	Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IBA	Important Bird and Biodiversity Area
ICCAs	Indigenous and Community Conserved Area Area (may also be referred to as territories and areas conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities or “territories of life”)
IPLC	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
OECM	Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures
PA	Protected Area
PAME	Protected Area Management Effectiveness
PPA	Privately Protected Area
ProtConn	Protected Connected land indicator
SOC	Soil Organic Carbon
TEOW	Terrestrial Ecosystems of the World
WDPA	World Database on Protected Areas
WD-OECM	World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures



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This country dossier is compiled by the UNDP and SCBD from publicly available information. It is prepared, within the overall work of the Global Partnership on Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, for the purpose of attracting the attention of the Party concerned and other national stakeholders to facilitate the verification, correcting, and updating of country data. The statistics might differ from those reported officially by the country due to differences in methodologies and datasets used to assess protected area coverage and differences in the base maps used to measure terrestrial and marine area of a country or territory. Furthermore, the suggestions from the UNDP and SCBD are based on analyses of global datasets, which may not necessarily be representative of national policy or criteria used at the national level. The analyses are also subject to the limits inherent in global indicators (precision, reliability, underlying assumptions, etc.). Therefore, they provide useful information but cannot replace analyses at a national level nor constitute a future benchmark for national policy or decision-making.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides information on the coverage of protected areas (PAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), as currently reported in global databases (the World Database on Protected Areas ([WDPA](#)) and World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures ([WD-OECM](#))). It also includes details on the status of the other qualifying elements of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 based on this data. These statistics might differ from those reported officially by countries due to difference in methodologies and datasets used to assess protected area coverage, differences in the base maps used to measure terrestrial and marine area of a country or territory, or if global datasets differ from the criteria and indicators used at the national level. This dossier also provides a summary of commitments made under Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, and a summary of potential opportunities regarding elements of the target for future planning.

The dossier has been developed in consultation with the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), which manages the WDPA, WD-OECM and Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness ([GD-PAME](#)).

Parties to the CBD are requested to contact protectedareas@unep-wcmc.org with any updates to the information in these databases.

Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 Elements: Current status and opportunities for action

Coverage

- **Status:** as of May 2021, terrestrial coverage in Afghanistan is 23,383.9 km² (3.6%).
- **Opportunities for action:** opportunities for the near-term include updating the WDPA with any unreported PAs, and the recognizing and reporting OECMs to the WD-OECM. In the future, focus on relatively intact areas, while addressing the elements in the following sections, could be considered when planning new PAs or OECMs.

Ecological Representativeness

- **Status:** Afghanistan contains 17 terrestrial ecoregions: the mean protected coverage by reported PAs and OECMs is 20.5% and 4 terrestrial ecoregions have no coverage by reported PAs and OECMs.
- **Opportunities for action:** there is opportunity for Afghanistan to increase protection in terrestrial ecoregions that have lower levels of coverage by PAs or OECMs. Ecoregions which currently have no coverage by PAs or OECMs are key areas for action.



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Areas Important for Biodiversity

- **Status:** Afghanistan has 17 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs): the mean protected coverage of KBAs by reported PAs and OECMs is 46.5%, while 8 KBAs have no coverage by reported PAs and OECMs.
- **Opportunities for action:** there is opportunity for Afghanistan to increase protection of KBAs that have lower levels of coverage by PAs and OECMs; priority could be given to those with no current coverage.

Areas Important for Ecosystem Services

- **Status:** coverage of areas important for ecosystem services: In Afghanistan, 2.5% of aboveground biomass carbon, 2.1% of belowground biomass carbon and 3.2% of soil organic carbon is covered by PAs and OECMs.
- **Opportunities for action:** for carbon, there is opportunity for Afghanistan to increase PA and OECM coverage in terrestrial areas with high carbon stocks. Protecting areas with high carbon stocks secures the benefits of carbon sequestration in the area.
- For water, there is opportunity to increase the area of the water catchment under protection by PAs and OECMs, or in cases where there is high levels of protection, focus on effective management for these areas. Protecting the current area of forested land and potentially reforesting would have benefits for improving water security.

Connectivity and Integration

- **Status:** coverage of protected-connected lands is 2.1%.
- **Opportunities for action:** there is opportunity for a general increase of PAs or OECMs and to focus on PA and OECM management for enhancing and maintaining connectivity. Increasing connectivity increases the effectiveness of PAs and OECMs and reduces the impacts of fragmentation.
- As well, a range of suggested steps for enhancing and supporting integration are included in the voluntary guidance on the integration of PAs and OECMs into the wider land- and seascapes and mainstreaming across sectors to contribute, inter alia, to the SDGs (Annex I of COP Decision 14/8).

Governance Diversity

- **Status:** the most common governance type(s) for reported PAs in Afghanistan is: 100.0% under Government (Federal or national ministry or agency).
- **Opportunities for action:** explore opportunities for governance types that have lower representation, for Afghanistan this could relate to shared governance, etc.
- There is also opportunity for Afghanistan to complete governance and equity assessments, to establish baselines and identify relevant actions for improvement. As well, a range of suggested actions are included in the voluntary guidance on



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effective governance models for management of protected areas, including equity (Annex II of COP Decision 14/8).

Protected Area Management Effectiveness

- **Status:** 2.6% of terrestrial PAs have completed Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) assessments reported.
- **Opportunities for action:** the 60% target for completed management effectiveness assessments (per COP Decision X/31) **has not** been met for terrestrial PAs, therefore, there is opportunity to increase protected area management effectiveness (PAME) evaluations for terrestrial PAs to achieve the target.
- There is also opportunity to implement the results of completed PAME evaluations, to improve the quality of management for existing PAs and OECMs (e.g. through adaptive management and information sharing, increasing the number of sites reporting 'sound management') and to increase reporting of biodiversity outcomes in PAs and OECMs.



INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 was adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan from 18-29 October 2010. The vision of the Strategic Plan is one of “Living in harmony with nature” where *“By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people”* (CBD, 2010). In addition to this vision, the Strategic Plan is composed of 20 targets, under five strategic goals. Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 states that *“By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.”*

With the conclusion of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in 2020, Target 11 on area-based conservation has seen success in the expansion of the global network of protected areas (PA) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). The negotiation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and its future targets provide an essential opportunity to further improve the coverage of PAs and OECMs, to improve other aspects of area-based conservation, to accelerate progress on biodiversity conservation more broadly, while also addressing climate change, and the Sustainable Development Goals. This next set of global biodiversity targets are to be adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. These new targets must aim to build upon lessons learned from the last decade of progress to deliver transformative change for the benefit of nature and people, to realize the 2050 Vision for biodiversity.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity have developed the Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 Country Dossiers, which provide countries with an overview of the status of Target 11 elements, opportunities for action, and a summary of commitments made by Parties over the last decade. Each country dossier can support countries in assessing their progress on key elements of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and identifying opportunities to prioritize new protected areas and OECMs.

This dossier provides an overview of area-based conservation in Afghanistan. Section I of the dossier presents data on the current status of Afghanistan’s PAs and OECMs. The data presented in Section I relates to each element of Target 11. Section I also presents the PA and OECM coverage for two critical ecosystem services: water security and carbon stocks. In addition, the dossier presents potential opportunities for action for Afghanistan, in relation to each Target 11 element. The analyses present options for improving Afghanistan’s area-based conservation network to achieve enhanced protection and benefits for livelihoods and climate change. Section II presents details on Afghanistan’s existing PA and OECMs commitments as a summary of existing efforts towards achieving Target 11. This gives focus not only to national policy and actions but also voluntary



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commitments to the UN. Furthermore, where data is available, this dossier provides information on potential OECMs, Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs; also often referred to as territories and areas conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities or “territories of life”) and Privately Protected Areas (PPAs) and the potential contribution they will have in achieving the post-2020 targets.

The information on PAs and OECMs presented in this dossier is derived from the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM). These databases are joint products of UNEP and IUCN, managed by UNEP-WCMC, and can be viewed and downloaded at www.protectedplanet.net. Parties are encouraged to provide data on their PAs and OECMs to UNEP-WCMC for incorporation into the databases (see e.g. Decisions 10/31 and 14/8). The significant efforts of Parties in updating their data in the build up to the publication of the Protected Planet Report 2020 (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, 2021) were greatly appreciated. UNEP-WCMC welcomes further updates, following the data standards described [here](#), and these should be directed to protectedareas@unep-wcmc.org. The statistics presented in this dossier are derived from the May 2021 WDPA and WD-OECM releases, unless explicitly stated otherwise. Readers should consult www.protectedplanet.net for the latest coverage statistics (updated monthly).

Some data from the WDPA and WD-OECM are not made publicly available at the request of the data-provider. This affects some statistics, maps, and figures presented in this dossier. Statistics provided by UNEP-WCMC (terrestrial and marine coverage) are based upon the full dataset, including restricted data. All other statistics, maps, and figures are based upon the subset of the data that is publicly available.

Where data is less readily available, such as for potential OECMs, ICCAs and PPAs, data has also been compiled from published reports and scientific literature to provide greater awareness of these less commonly recorded aspects. These data are provided to highlight the need for comprehensive reporting on these areas to the WDPA and/or WD-OECM. Parties are invited to work with indigenous peoples, local communities and private actors to submit data under the governance of these actors, with their consent, to the WDPA and/or WD-OECM.

Overall, PAs and OECMs are essential instruments for biodiversity conservation and to sustain essential ecosystem services that support human well-being and sustainable development, including food, medicine, and water security, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The data in this dossier, therefore, aims to celebrate the current contributions of PAs and OECMs, whilst the gaps presented hope to encourage greater progress, not just for the benefit of biodiversity and the post-2020 GBF, but also to recognize the essential role of PAs and OECMs to the Sustainable Development Goals and for addressing the climate crisis.



SECTION I: CURRENT STATUS

Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 refers to both protected areas (PAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). This section provides the current status for all elements of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 where indicators with global data are available. Statistics for all elements are presented using data on both PAs and OECMs (where this data is available and reported in global databases like the WDPA and WD-OECM). It is recognized that statistics reported in the WPDA and WD-OECM might differ from those reported officially by countries due to differences in methodologies and datasets used to assess protected area coverage and differences in the base maps used to measure terrestrial and marine area of a country or territory. Details on UNEP-WCMC's methods for calculating PA and OECM coverage area available [here](#). The global indicators adopted here for presenting the status of other elements of Target 11 may also differ from those in use nationally.



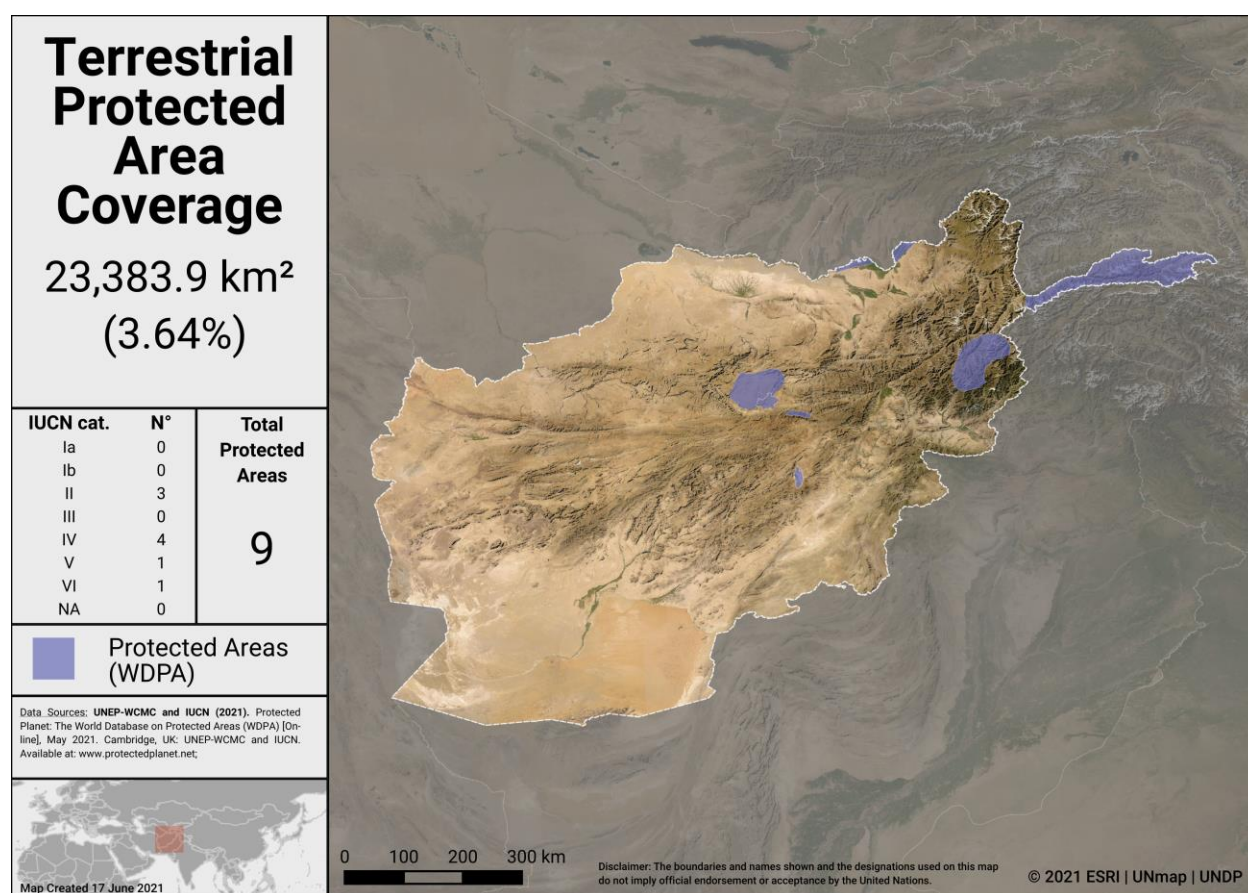
COVERAGE

As of May 2021, Afghanistan has **15** protected areas reported in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA). 6 proposed PAs are not included in the following statistics (see details on UNWP-WCMCs methods for calculating PA and OECM coverage [here](#)).

As of May 2021, Afghanistan has **0** OECMs reported in the world database on OECMs (WD-OECM).

Current coverage for Afghanistan:

- 3.6% terrestrial (9 protected areas, 23,383.9 km²)



Terrestrial Protected Areas in Afghanistan

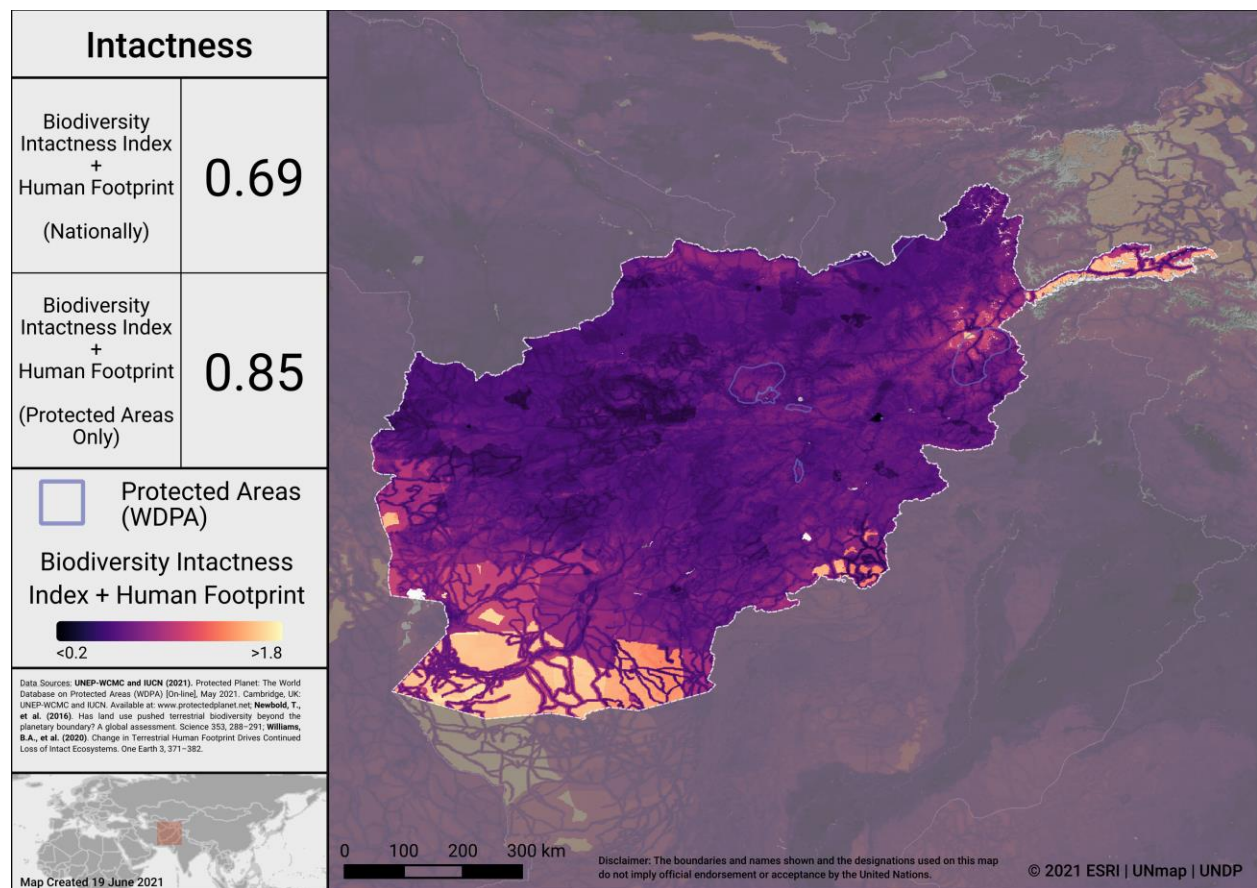
Potential OECMs

There are currently no potential OECM examples for Afghanistan.

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Opportunities for action

Opportunities for the near-term include updating the WDPA with any unreported PAs, and the recognizing and reporting OECMs to the WD-OECM. In the future, as Afghanistan considers where to add new PAs and OECMs, the map below identifies areas in Afghanistan where intact terrestrial areas are not currently protected. Focus on relatively intact areas, while addressing the elements in the following sections, could be considered when planning new PAs or OECMs.



Intactness in Afghanistan

To explore more on intactness visit the UN Biodiversity Lab: map.unbiodiversitylab.org.

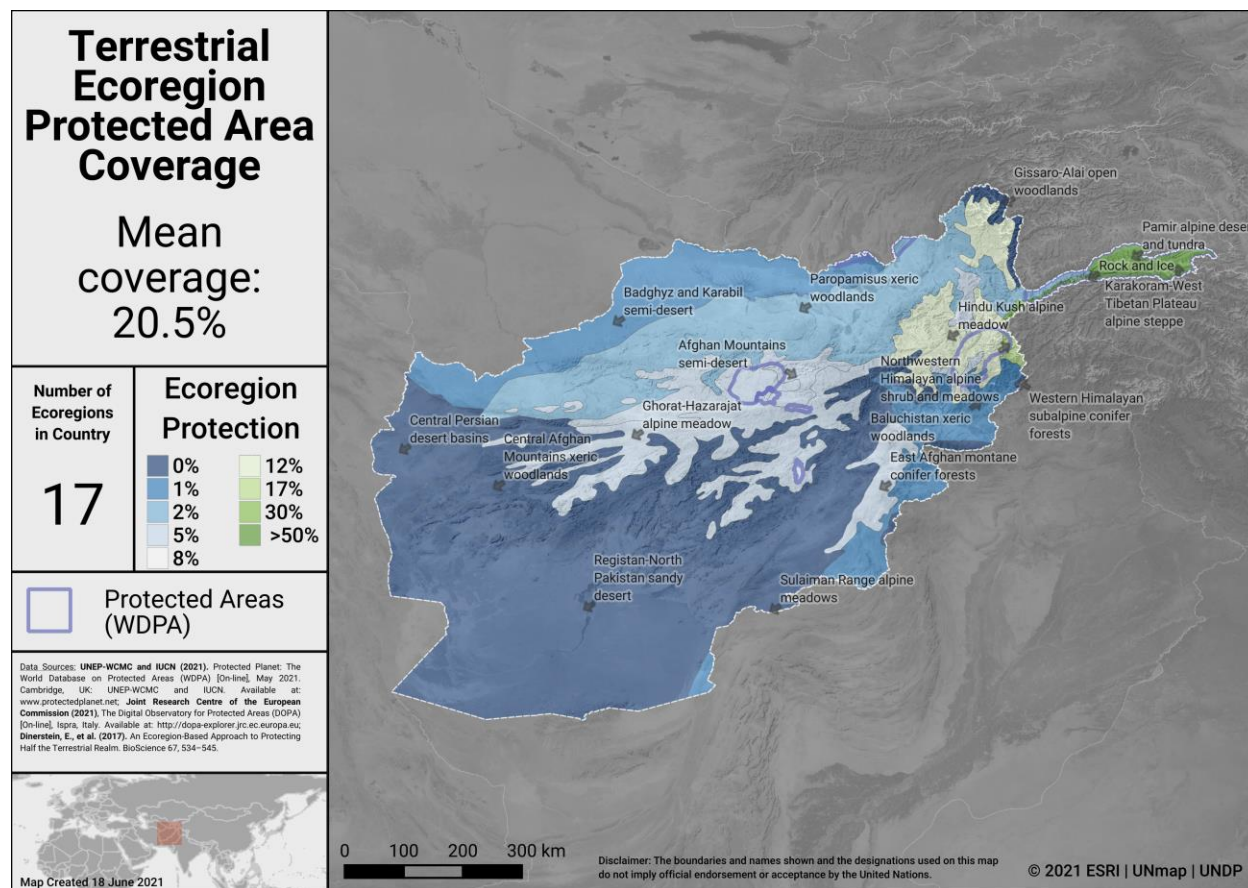
ECOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIVENESS

Ecological representativeness is assessed based on the PA and OECM coverage of broad-scale biogeographic units. Globally, ecoregions have been described for terrestrial areas (Dinerstein et al, 2017), marine coastal and shelf ecosystems (to a depth of 200m; Spalding et al 2007) and surface pelagic waters (Spalding et al 2012).

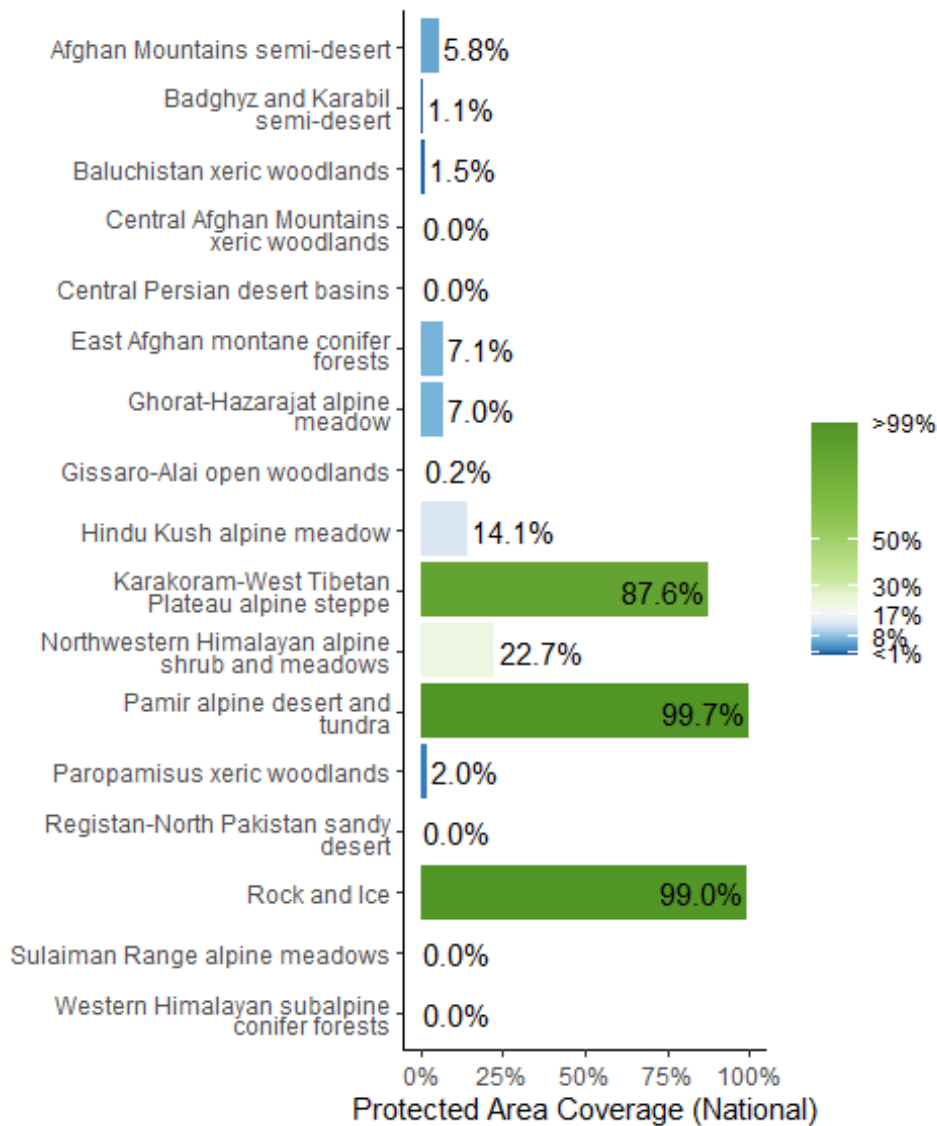
Afghanistan has 17 **terrestrial** ecoregions. Out of these:

- 13 ecoregions have at least some coverage from PAs and OECMs.
- 4 ecoregions have at least 17% protected within the country.
- The average terrestrial coverage of ecoregions is 20.5%.

A full list of ecoregions in Afghanistan is available in Annex I.



Terrestrial ecoregions in Afghanistan



Terrestrial ecoregions of the World (TEOW) in Afghanistan

Opportunities for action

There is opportunity for Afghanistan to increase protection in terrestrial ecoregions that have lower levels of coverage by PAs or OECMs. Ecoregions which currently have no coverage by PAs or OECMs are key areas for action.



AREAS IMPORTANT FOR BIODIVERSITY

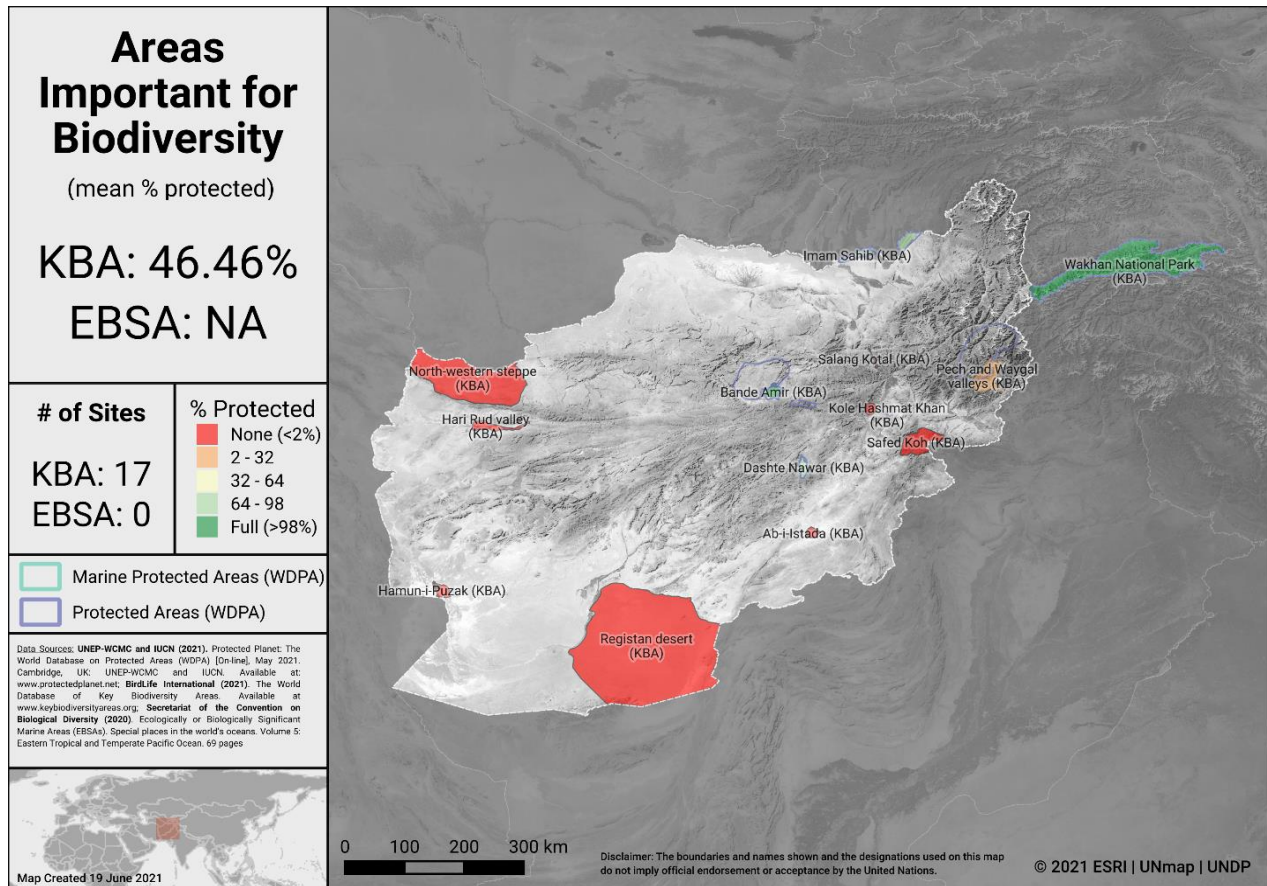
Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)

Protected area and OECM coverage of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) provide one proxy for assessing the conservation of areas important for biodiversity at national, regional and global scales. KBAs are sites that make significant contributions to the global persistence of biodiversity (IUCN, 2016). The KBA concept builds on four decades of efforts to identify important sites for biodiversity, including Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, Alliance for Zero Extinction sites, and KBAs identified through Hotspot ecosystem profiles supported by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. Incorporating these sites, the dataset of internationally significant KBAs includes Global KBAs (sites shown to meet one or more of 11 criteria in the Global Standard for the Identification of KBAs, clustered into five categories: threatened biodiversity; geographically restricted biodiversity; ecological integrity; biological processes; and irreplaceability), Regional KBAs (sites identified using pre-existing criteria and thresholds, that do not meet the Global KBA criteria based on existing information), and KBAs whose Global/Regional status is Not yet determined, but which will be assessed against the global KBA criteria within 8-12 years. Regional KBAs are often of critical international policy relevance (e.g., in EU legislation and under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands), and many are likely to qualify as Global KBAs in future once assessed for their biodiversity importance for other taxonomic groups and ecosystems. To date, nearly 16,000 KBAs have identified globally, and information on each of these is presented in the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas: www.keybiodiversityareas.org.

Afghanistan has **17** Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

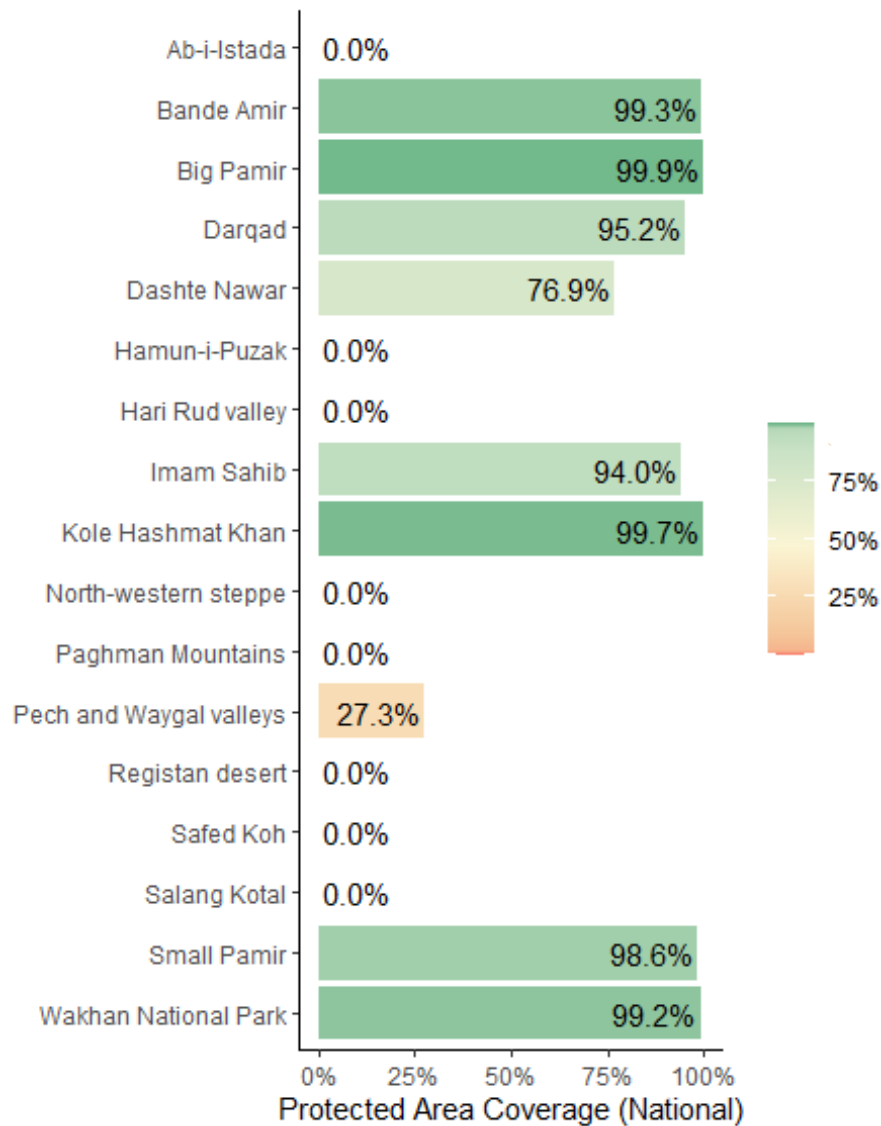
- Mean percent coverage of all KBAs by PAs and OECMs in Afghanistan is **46.5%**.
- **5** KBAs have full (>98%) coverage by PAs and OECMs.
- **4** KBAs have partial coverage by PAs and OECMs.
- **8** KBAs have no (<2%) coverage by PAs and OECMs.





Areas Important for Biodiversity in Afghanistan

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Key Biodiversity Area Coverage (KBA) in Afghanistan

Opportunities for action

There is opportunity for Afghanistan to increase protection of KBAs that have lower levels of coverage by PAs and OECMs; priority could be given to those with no current coverage.

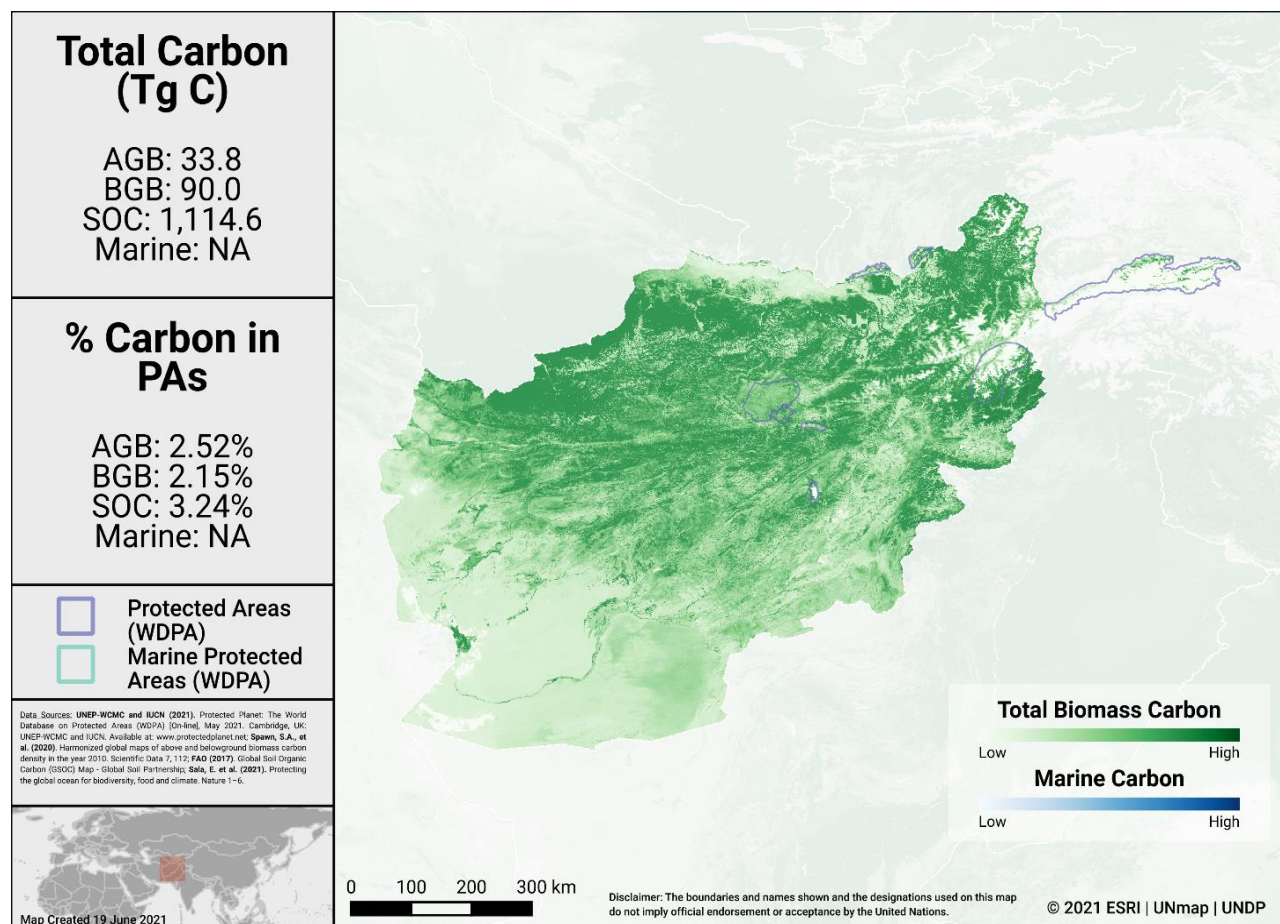
AREAS IMPORTANT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

There is no single indicator identified for assessing the conservation of areas important for ecosystem services. For simplicity, two services with available global datasets are assessed here (carbon and water). In future, other critical ecosystem services could be explored.

Carbon

Data for biomass carbon comes from temporally consistent and harmonized global maps of aboveground biomass and belowground biomass carbon density (at a 300-m spatial resolution); the maps integrate land-cover specific, remotely sensed data, and land-cover specific empirical models (see Spawn et al., 2020 for details on methodology). The Global Soil Organic Carbon Map present an estimation of SOC stock from 0 to 30 cm (see FAO, 2017).

The map below presents the total carbon stocks in Afghanistan and the percent of carbon in protected areas. The total carbon stocks is 33.8 Tg C from aboveground biomass (AGB), with 2.5% in protected areas; 90.0 Tg C from below ground biomass (BGB), with 2.1% in protected areas and 1,114.6 Tg C from soil organic carbon (SOC), with 3.2% in protected areas.



Carbon Stocks in Afghanistan

Water

Forests and intact ecosystems support stormwater management and clean water availability, especially for large urban populations. Research that has examined the role of forests for city drinking water supplies shows that of the world's 105 largest cities, more than 30% (33 cities) rely heavily on the local protected forests, which provide ecosystem services that underpin local drinking water availability and quality (Dudley & Stolton, 2003).

Drinking water supplies for cities in Afghanistan may similarly depend on protected areas within and around water catchments. Intact catchments can support more consistent water supply and improved water quality.

Opportunities for action

For carbon, there is opportunity for Afghanistan to increase PA and OECM coverage in terrestrial areas with high carbon stocks, as identified in the map above. Protecting areas with high carbon stocks secures the benefits of carbon sequestration in the area.

For water, there is opportunity to increase the area of the water catchment under protection by PAs and OECMs, or in cases where there is high levels of protection, focus on effective management for these areas. Protecting the current area of forested land and potentially reforesting would have benefits for improving water security.



CONNECTIVITY & INTEGRATION

Two global indicators, the Protected Connected land indicator (ProtConn; see EC-JRC, 2021, and Saura et al., 2018) and the PARC-Connectedness indicator (CSIRO, 2019), have been proposed for assessing the terrestrial connectivity of PA and OECM networks (to date there is no global indicator for assessing marine connectivity).

Protected Connected Land Indicator (Prot-Conn)

As of January 2021, as reported in the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission's Digital Observatory for Protected Areas (DOPA) (JRC, 2021), the coverage of protected-connected lands (a measure of the connectivity of terrestrial protected area networks, assessed using the ProtConn indicator) in Afghanistan was 2.1%.

PARC-Connectedness Index

In 2019, as assessed using the PARC-Connectedness Index (values ranging from 0-1, indicating low to high connectivity), connectivity in Afghanistan is 0.34. This represents no significant change since 2010.

Corridor case studies

There are currently no corridor case studies available for Afghanistan (but see general details on conserving connectivity through ecological networks and corridors in Hilty et al 2020).

Opportunities for action

There is opportunity for a general increase in PA or OECM cover and to focus on PA and OECM management for enhancing and maintaining connectivity. Increasing connectivity increases the effectiveness of PAs and OECMs and reduces the impacts of fragmentation.

As well, a range of suggested steps for enhancing and supporting integration are included in the voluntary guidance on the integration of PAs and OECMs into the wider land- and seascapes and mainstreaming across sectors to contribute, inter alia, to the SDGs (Annex I of COP Decision 14/8).



GOVERNANCE DIVERSITY

There is a lack of comprehensive global data on governance quality and equity in PAs and OECMs. Here, we provide data on the diversity of governance types for reported PAs and OECMs.

As of May 2021, PAs in Afghanistan reported in the WDPA have the following governance types:

- 100.0% are governed by **governments** (by federal or national ministry or agency)
- 0.0% are under **shared** governance
- 0.0% are under **private** governance
- 0.0% are under **IPLC** governance
- 0.0% **do not** report a governance type

OECMs

As of May 2021, there are **0** OECMs in Afghanistan reported in the WD-OECM, therefore there is no data available on OECM governance types.

Privately Protected Areas (PPAs)

There is currently no data available on PPAs for Afghanistan (see Gloss et al., 2019, and Stolton et al., 2014 for details).

Territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities (ICCAs)

There is currently no data available on ICCAs for Afghanistan (see Kothari et al., 2012 and the [ICCA Registry](#) for further details).

Other Indigenous lands

There is currently no data available on lands managed and/or controlled by Indigenous Peoples in Afghanistan (see Garnett et al 2018 for details).

Opportunities for action

Explore opportunities for governance types that have lower representation, for Afghanistan this could relate to shared governance, etc.

There is also opportunity for Afghanistan to complete governance and equity assessments, to establish baselines and identify relevant actions for improvement. Examples of existing tools and methodologies include: Governance Assessment for Protected and Conserved Areas (Franks & Brooker, 2018), Social Assessment of Protected Areas (Franks et al 2018), and Site-level assessment of governance and equity (IIED, 2020). As well, a range of suggested actions are included in the voluntary guidance on effective governance models for management of protected areas, including equity (Annex II of COP Decision 14/8).



Equator Prize Projects

The Equator Initiative brings together the United Nations, governments, civil society, businesses and grassroots organizations to recognize and advance local sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities.

The Equator Prize projects provide examples of unique and locally based governance of natural resources. Afghanistan has the following Equator Prize winners that showcase examples of local, sustainable community action:

Organization	Year	Project Description
Rural Green Environment Organization	2015	In one of the most remote and poorest provinces in Afghanistan, the Rural Green Environment Organization is working with over 40,000 people across an area of 1,500 square kilometers and 90 villages to promote a model of community development that is based on peace building, environmental regeneration, sustainable livelihoods, and wildlife protection. Following decades of conflict, insecurity, and the overharvesting of natural resources, the initiative is working to restore ecosystem functioning through a community-driven approach. The organization has worked through community elders to create a community-based forum to ban illegal fishing and hunting, improve food security, and restore degraded lands. Activities include food for work projects, tree nurseries, forest guard patrols, and reforestation with fruit- and nut-bearing trees. The initiative has created 6,150 jobs, constructed five kilometers of irrigation canals, protected two kilometers of river, constructed 125 check dams and 120,000 meters of terracing, and planted over 200,000 trees, including 16 local vine varieties that prevent soil erosion and contribute to food security. Village mosques, schools, and Koran study groups are used to raise awareness of the benefits of environmental conservation. The initiative is a powerful model of landscape restoration and poverty reduction that has the potential to be replicated across the region.





Photo from Equator Prize Project: Rural Green Environment Organization

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

This section provides information on the coverage of PAs and OECMs with completed protected area management effectiveness (PAME) assessments as reported in the global database (GD-PAME). The proportion of terrestrial and marine PAs with completed PAME assessments is also calculated and compared with the 60% target agreed to in COP-10 Decision X/31.

Protected area management effectiveness (PAME) assessments

As of May 2021, Afghanistan has 15 PAs reported in the WDPA; of these PAs, 2 (13.3%) have management effectiveness evaluations reported in the global database on protected area management effectiveness (GD-PAME).

- 0.1% (608 km²) of the terrestrial area of the country is covered by PAs with completed management effectiveness evaluations.
 - 2.6% of the area of terrestrial PAs have completed evaluations.

The 60% target for completed management effectiveness assessments (per COP Decision X/31) **has not** been met for terrestrial PAs.

As of May 2021, there are 0 OECMs in Afghanistan reported in the WD-OECM and no information available on the management effectiveness of potential OECMs.

Opportunities for action

The 60% target for completed management effectiveness assessments (per COP Decision X/31) **has not** been met for terrestrial PAs, therefore, there is opportunity to increase protected area management effectiveness (PAME) evaluations for terrestrial PAs to achieve the target.

There is also opportunity to implement the results of completed PAME evaluations, to improve the quality of management for existing PAs and OECMs (e.g. through adaptive management and information sharing, increasing the number of sites reporting 'sound management') and to increase reporting of biodiversity outcomes in PAs and OECMs.



SECTION II: EXISTING PROTECTED AREA AND OECM COMMITMENTS

PRIORITY ACTIONS FROM 2015-2016 REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

National priority actions for Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 were provided by Parties following a series of regional workshops in 2015 and 2016. The Capacity-building workshop for South, Central and West Asia on achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12 took place 7 - 10 December 2015 in New Delhi, India. Progress towards the quantitative targets for marine and terrestrial coverage has been assessed based on data reported in the WDPA and WD-OECM as of 2021. For more information, see the workshop report at: <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

The following actions were identified during the workshops:

Terrestrial coverage: Establish priority and feasible protected areas a legally recognized, adequately funded and effectively managed entities. Candidate priority areas are Band-i-Amir, Ajar valley, Pamir-i- Buzurg, the entire wakhan corridor region, Dashte Nower and Shah Foladi. [now designated and reported in WDPA].

Ecological representation:

- 1) **PRELIMINARY TARGET:** At least 10% of each ecological region effectively conserved, and areas of particular importance to biodiversity protected.
- 2) Finalize a protected area system plan for Afghanistan designed to protect representative areas of high biodiversity in all major ecoregions, including trans-boundary areas, and articulating clear targets for the protected area system and methods for implementing it.

Areas Important for biodiversity and ecosystem services:

- 1) Develop a scientific inventory of flora and fauna. & encourage national and international scholars to develop a comprehensive flora of Afghanistan, drawing particularly on Afghan collections in herbaria in Europe, North America and Russia.
- 2) Develop the National protected Areas system envisioned in the protected areas legislation; survey all wetland and potential protected areas to determine current status and suitability for inclusion into the protected areas system plan; ensure that sufficient attention is paid to mountain areas (the predominant ecosystem in Afghanistan and the likely focus of future ecotourism activities).

No actions were identified for the following elements of Target 11: Connectivity; Management effectiveness; Governance and Equity; Integration into the wider landscape and seascape



NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLANS (NBSAPs)

Afghanistan has submitted an NBSAP during the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (most recent NBSAP is available at: <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/search/>).

This NBSAP **did** include a quantitative target for **terrestrial** PAs or OECMs.

Afghanistan preliminary target 1: At least 10% of each ecological region effectively conserved, and areas of particular importance to biodiversity protected

- As of May 2021 (based on the WDPA/WD-OECM) has the target been met: **NO**
- Accounting for other projects, actions and commitments, if this target is met, coverage in the country will increase by **~50,000 km²**.



APPROVED GEF-5 & GEF-6 PROTECTED AREA PROJECTS

Approved GEF-5 and GEF-6 PA-related biodiversity projects

This includes biodiversity projects from the fifth and sixth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-5 and GEF-6) with a clear impact of the quantity or quality of PAs; also including some projects occurring within the wider landscapes/seascapes around PAs. Only those with a status of 'project approved' or 'concept approved' as of June 2019 were considered. The qualifying elements likely benefiting from each GEF project is assessed based on a keyword search of Project Identification Forms (PIF). Where spatial data for the proposed PAs was available, further details (based on an analysis by UNDP) regarding their impacts for ecological representation, coverage of KBAs, and coverage of areas important for carbon storage is included.

GEF ID	PA increase?	Area to be added (km ²)	Type of new protected area	Qualitative elements potentially benefitting (based on keyword search of PIFs)
4839	Yes	already in WDPAs	Terrestrial	All except Connectivity and Integration
9285	No	N/A	N/A	All except Ecologically representative
9531	No	N/A	N/A	Areas important for biodiversity; Integration

Based on spatial data available, GEF project 4839 provided benefits for several elements of Target 11:

Coverage of Terrestrial Ecoregions:

- 6 Terrestrial Ecoregions improved coverage. These Ecoregions are: Afghan Mountains semi-desert; Ghorat-Hazarajat alpine meadow; Karakoram-West Tibetan Plateau alpine steppe; Pamir alpine desert and tundra; Paropamisus xeric woodlands; Rock and Ice.
 - The average increase in coverage of Terrestrial Ecoregions was 21.56%.

Coverage of KBAs:

- Coverage improved for 3 KBAs.

Ecosystem services:

- 5.5 % increase in the PA coverage of soil organic carbon (SOC).
- 9.2 % increase in the PA coverage of areas important for SOC.



ANNEX I

FULL LIST OF ECOREGIONS

Ecoregion Name	Area (km ²)	% of Global Ecoregion in Country	% of Country in Ecoregion	Area Protected (km ²)	% Protected in Country
Afghan Mountains semi-desert	13,682.5	100.0	2.1	800.3	5.8
Badghyz and Karabil semi-desert	53,773.5	40.2	8.4	569.9	1.1
Baluchistan xeric woodlands	33,227.0	11.5	5.2	484.3	1.5
Central Afghan Mountains xeric woodlands	139,310.2	100.0	21.7	1.7	0.0
Central Persian desert basins	22,623.6	3.9	3.5	0.0	0.0
East Afghan montane conifer forests	12,757.9	63.6	2.0	901.2	7.1
Ghorat-Hazarajat alpine meadow	66,482.1	100.0	10.4	4,679.0	7.0
Gissaro-Alai open woodlands	3,644.2	2.2	0.6	9.1	0.2
Hindu Kush alpine meadow	28,268.3	100.0	4.4	3,992.5	14.1
Karakoram-West Tibetan Plateau alpine steppe	4,506.0	3.1	0.7	3,945.3	87.6
Northwestern Himalayan alpine shrub and meadows	1,523.4	3.1	0.2	345.5	22.7
Pamir alpine desert and tundra	5,015.5	4.2	0.8	5,002.5	99.7
Paropamisus xeric woodlands	92,418.8	99.8	14.4	1,884.0	2.0

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Ecoregion Name	Area (km²)	% of Global Ecoregion in Country	% of Country in Ecoregion	Area Protected (km²)	% Protected in Country
Registan-North Pakistan sandy desert	159,410.9	57.5	24.8	0.0	0.0
Rock and Ice	689.4	0.0	0.1	682.7	99.0
Sulaiman Range alpine meadows	4,265.1	17.9	0.7	0.0	0.0
Western Himalayan subalpine conifer forests	216.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0



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