

# Anchoring 30×30 in “Conservation Imperatives”

## Securing the 1.22% to Prevent Global Mass Extinction

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2022 adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) established the ambitious “30×30” target (Target 3), mandating the conservation of 30% of Earth’s surface by 2030.

However, meeting this target is currently a “numbers game.” Without strategic prioritization, we risk protecting large, low-value areas that meet numerical goals while critical biodiversity vanishes.

We propose that the **1.22%** of Earth’s terrestrial surface identified as “**Conservation Imperatives**” (CIs) serve as the prioritized strategic anchor points for 30×30 implementation. Securing these **164 million hectares** is the highest-yield, lowest-risk pathway to halting imminent extinctions. By integrating an Interaction Diagnostic, this strategy transforms global conservation from a top-down mandate into a local opportunity for social justice and economic stability.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prioritize the **1.22%**: Formalize “Conservation Imperatives” as the primary headline indicator for success to maximize extinction prevention.
2. Implement an **Interaction Diagnostic**: Move beyond “one-size-fits-all” conservation by categorizing sites based on human-nature interactions (Guardianship, Subsistence, or Conflict).
3. Mobilize **US\$263 Billion**: Redirect 7% of harmful subsidies to cover the one-time designation costs of these critical nodes.
4. Institutionalize **Shared Data Platforms**: Establish high-resolution, transparent monitoring systems to ensure accountability and track biological integrity in real-time.
5. Adopt an **IPBES-Aligned Glossary**: Standardize technical terms to ensure legal and scientific consistency across jurisdictions.

### *The Context: Beyond the “Quantity Trap”*

The current race to reach 30% coverage is creating a “Quantity Trap.” Governments are incentivized to designate vast areas of low-biodiversity value because they are politically, economically, and socially easier to protect. Meanwhile, the most critical habitats, often small, fragmented, and located in productive landscapes, remain unprotected.

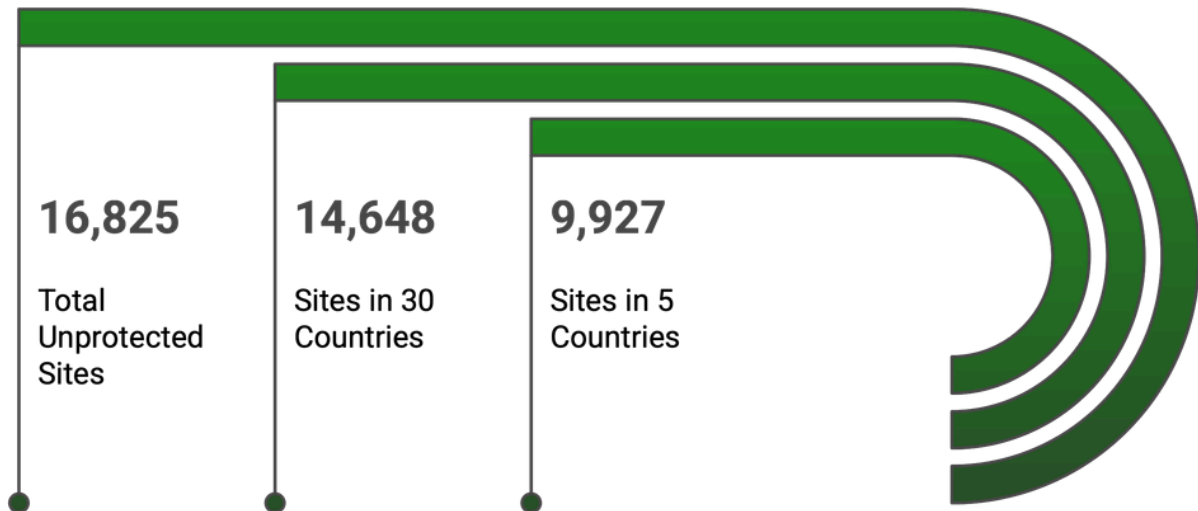
### *Why this matters now?*

- **Biological Crisis**: Monitored wildlife populations have declined by an average of 69% since 1970, with a catastrophic 94% drop in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- **Economic Risk**: The collapse of ecosystem services (pollination, fisheries) could cost the global economy US\$2.7 trillion annually by 2030.
- **Social Reality**: 1.22% of Earth’s terrestrial surface are provisioning systems for 2 billion people. Protecting them is not just an environmental goal; it is a human rights necessity.

## The Solution: Conservation Imperatives (CIs)

Research by Dinerstein et al. (2024) identifies **16,825** currently unprotected sites that harbor the world's most rare and threatened species. These CIs represent a "Concentration Effect":

- **Compact Footprint:** They cover only 1.22% of terrestrial Earth.
- **High Concentration:** Just **30** countries contain 87% of these sites; five countries (Philippines, Brazil, Indonesia, Madagascar, Colombia) house 59%.
- **Maximum Impact:** Protecting these specific nodes can prevent the majority of predicted near-term extinctions, aligning directly with GBF Target 4.



### Territorial Diagnosis for Differentiated Implementation

This brief proposes a landscape diagnosis to guide the implementation of the 1.22% allocation in the most relevant and effective way. Based on the functional characteristics of different areas, we recommend differentiated approaches tailored to three distinct landscape types.

Type of areas	Primary risks	Policy intervention	Local social synergy	SDG alignment
<b>Community Conserved</b> (Traditional stewardship & biocultural heritage)	<b>Territorial Dispossession and Involuntary Displacement</b> of local communities for conservation purposes.	Institutionalize <b>Free, Prior, and Informed Consent</b> as a permanent legal veto and formalize land titles.	<b>Empowerment:</b> Validates local knowledge as the primary governance tool.	<b>SDG 16</b> (Justice) & <b>SDG 10</b> (Reduced Inequalities)
<b>Subsistence Systems</b> (Small-scale farming)	<b>Humanitarian Crises</b> caused by top-down restrictions.	Protect <b>Usufruct Rights</b> and fund agro-ecological intensification.	<b>Resilience:</b> Secures food sovereignty and prevents involuntary unemployment and increasing revenue.	<b>SDG 2</b> (Zero Hunger) & <b>SDG 8</b> (Decent Work)
<b>Conflict Use</b> (Industrial forestry, mining, intensive agriculture)	<b>Asset Write-downs</b> and chronic local economic conflict.	Establish <b>Trilateral Dialogue Tables</b> for site-specific transition and coexistence plans.	<b>Restorative Justice:</b> Communities lead "nature-positive" rehabilitation and job creation.	<b>SDG 17</b> (Partnerships) & <b>SDG 12</b> (Responsible Production)

## Economic Feasibility



**Protection Cost:** Legally securing all CIs globally and designation of land for conservation requires approximately US\$263 billion. This represents a one-time global investment in biodiversity protection that reduces long-term ecological and economic risk.



**Transition Risk:** Conservation of land can conflict with existing land uses, particularly during rapid scale-up. A key challenge in implementing the 30x30 target is managing transition risk, as economies and land-use systems do not adjust smoothly. Prioritizing the 1.22% of land identified as biodiversity hotspots as an initial phase of expansion can reduce frictional social and financial costs, while laying a stable foundation for achieving the broader 30% goal.



**Management Costs:** Beyond designation, ongoing funding for managing wildfires, poaching, invasive species, etc. is required. However, these costs remain small relative to the ecosystem service losses that would result from the degradation of high-value biodiversity areas.

### Data Governance: Credibility through Transparency

Data-driven conservation requires more than static maps. Reliable, up-to-date, and accessible data provided the informational basis for identifying CIs and remain essential for adaptive planning and progress tracking. To remain actionable through 2030 and beyond, we should focus on strengthening data systems alongside conservation commitments:

I

#### Regular Update Cycles

Use remote sensing and monitoring to keep land cover, species distributions, and protection status current.

II

#### Integrated datasets & models

Combine global and national data on land, threats, feasibility, and all key species for well-informed decisions.

III

#### Shared Platforms

Integrate and provide transparent, accessible, and interoperable data for governments, Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, and funders.

## CONCLUSION

Target 3 of the GBF is not merely a quantitative goal to be reached by 2030; it is a qualitative requirement to save the functional integrity of our planet. By prioritizing the 1.22% Conservation Imperatives as strategic anchor points, policymakers can avoid the “Quantity Trap,” minimize economic transition risks, and meet their responsibilities to both biodiversity and the more than 2 billion people whose livelihoods and well-being depend on these critical landscapes.

The 1.22% strategy is not just a conservation plan – it is a surgical intervention for ecosystems under critical stress.

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