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Policy Brief

For discussion at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Part Two), Montreal, Canada.

Options to holistically account for chemical pollutants threatening biodiversity

Expanding Target 7 to better protect biodiversity from the threat of chemical pollution

The threat chemical pollution poses to biodiversity on a global scale has been acknowledged in the draft Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

In its current form, Target 7 proposes to regulate the release of chemicals to the environment and names specific indicators focusing on pesticides, nutrients and plastic waste.

We fully welcome the inclusion of these substance groups, but would like to emphasize further that in order to protect biodiversity from hazardous chemicals, the scope of Target 7 should feature a wider range of chemical pollutants that can contribute and are contributing to biodiversity loss.

CHEMICALS PROPOSED TO BE INCLUDED IN TARGET 7 OF THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

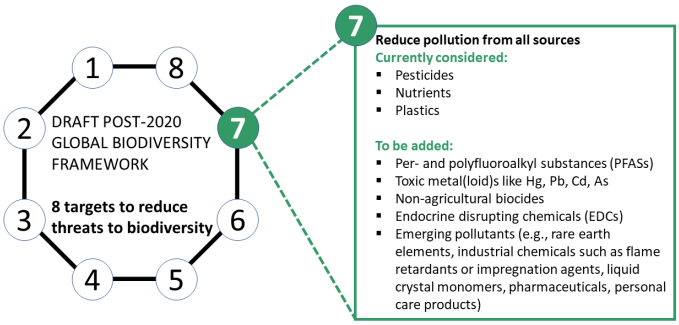
- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs)
- Toxic metal(loid)s like arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury
- Non-agricultural biocides
- Endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs)
- Other emerging pollutants (e.g. rare earth elements and other metals/metalloids, liquid crystal monomers, pharmaceuticals, personal care products)

Suggested amendment to draft Target 7

Overall reduction of chemical emissions. Reduce pollution of hazardous chemicals from all sources to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity, ecosystem functions or human health, including by reducing nutrients lost to the environment by at least half, pesticides by at least two thirds, eliminating the discharge of plastic waste, **and reducing non-agricultural biocides, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs), endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), metal(loid)s such as mercury have to be reduced to the lowest amounts possible. Furthermore, regular horizon-scanning of data on emerging pollutants with the aim to integrate additional pollutants to Target 7 in the case of biodiversity risk.**

Actions on the management and release of chemicals that can aid the protection of global biodiversity

(1) Global capping of production and emissions of anthropogenic chemicals, (2) Improvement of chemicals management through implementation of advanced concepts such as essential use and chemical simplification and (3) Development and use of less hazardous chemicals.



This work was facilitated by IPCP, the International Panel on Chemical Pollution, www.ipcp.ch.

For detailed background information, please refer to our publication: Mueller et al. 2022. Policy options to account for multiple chemical pollutants threatening biodiversity. Environ. Sci.: Adv., https://doi.org/10.1039/D2VA00257D

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