



TOWARDS SBSTTA-27: POLICY BRIEF ITEM 8: INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES (IAS): INTEGRATING GENDER AND HUMAN-RIGHTS BASED APPROACH UNDER KM-GBF TARGET 6

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Summary

Invasive alien species (IAS) are one of the five direct drivers of biodiversity loss, contributing to more than 60% of documented global extinctions and causing irreversible changes in ecosystems ([IPBES, 2023](#)). Their economic costs exceed USD 423 billion annually and are rising fourfold each decade. IAS also threaten food and water security, health, and livelihoods, with disproportionate impacts on Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, and youth.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) includes [Target 6](#), which calls for reducing rates of introduction and establishment of IAS by 50% by 2030, and for eradication or control in priority sites. While Parties have developed strategies and guidelines, major gaps remain in prevention, early detection, pathway management, governance, and rights-based safeguards ([IPBES, 2023](#); [CBD & IUCN, 2024](#)).

Achieving Target 6 requires urgent investment in cross-sectoral, whole-of-society approaches, harmonized monitoring and indicators, integration of IPLC knowledge, and alignment with human rights and gender equality frameworks ([CBD & IUCN, 2024](#)).

What is the issue?

Invasive alien species spread through intentional and unintentional pathways,

including trade, tourism, shipping, aquaculture, and illegal trafficking ([UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/9/Add.1](#)). [Article 8\(h\) of the](#)

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Convention on Biological Diversity obliges Parties to prevent, control, or eradicate IAS, and numerous COP decisions reaffirm this mandate.

According to Target 6 of the KM-GBF, IAS management, requires:

- Identifying and managing introduction pathways.
- Preventing the establishment of priority IAS and reducing rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential IAS.
- Eradicating or controlling IAS, especially on islands and other priority sites.

Despite this, IAS continues to expand, fueled by globalization, climate change, and gaps in governance. The IPBES assessment report on Invasive Alien Species and their control, warns that without urgent action, biological invasions will accelerate, undermining progress towards biodiversity, health, and sustainable development goals (IPBES, 2023).

Why is it important?

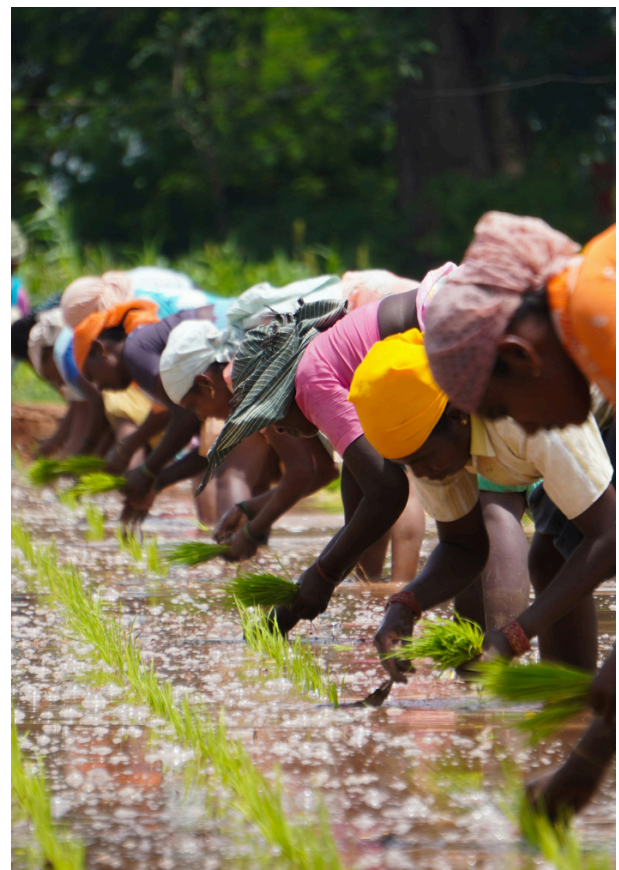
IAS are a cross-cutting threat. They compete with, prey on, or hybridize with native species, alter ecosystem processes, and increase vulnerability to other drivers such as climate change and pollution. For example, invasive plants can fuel wildfires, while invasive mosquitoes spread diseases such as dengue or malaria (IPBES, 2023). The impacts are not only ecological but also social and economic. IAS affects agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and infrastructure, with costs surpassing those of many other environmental threats (Eschen, et al., 2021; Patt, et al., 2017).

Communities who depend directly on ecosystems for food, medicine, and cultural

identity, face disproportionate risks but are rarely integrated into IAS decision-making. Over 2,300 IAS are found on Indigenous territories, threatening customary knowledge and practices. Management responses can also carry unintended risks if safeguards and participation are absent (IPBES, 2023). Recognizing Indigenous People, local communities, and women as rights-holders, is essential for just and effective IAS management.

What should be done?

- **Strengthen prevention and pathway management:** Parties should identify and prioritize pathways, and implement pathway action plans. Standards under the International Plant Protection Convention, the World Trade Organisation, and the Ballast Water Management Convention and IMO guidelines should be integrated into national systems.



- **Invest in early detection and rapid response:** Strategies should incorporate surveillance (eDNA, citizen science, reporting apps) and contingency funding for rapid eradication. A global rapid response fund could help address emergencies, especially in developing countries and islands
- **Enhance cross-sectoral governance and collaboration:** IAS management requires whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, engaging sectors such as trade, health, tourism, and transport. Also, Indigenous People, local communities, women's groups, and civil society organizations should be empowered through capacity building.
- **Applying a gender-responsive approach to IAS monitoring, detection and management:** Negative impact of IAS results in decreased water levels which compels women to walk long distances for water collection, which may cause uterus prolapses in pregnant women. Smaller children become more vulnerable to IAS.
- **Strengthen IPLC participation and community engagement:** Effective IAS prevention, detection, and management require the active involvement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, who are custodians of critical ecosystems and hold deep traditional knowledge on species and ecological interactions. Community-based monitoring and citizen science can enhance early detection and rapid response, while ensuring culturally appropriate and equitable management. Parties should provide direct financial support, capacity-building, and legal recognition for their contributions to IAS governance.



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About this brief

This brief outlines Women4Biodiversity's key recommendations for a gender-responsive implementation of Target 6 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF).

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