OPEN WEBINAR · 30 JULY 2026 · 15:00–16:15 BST

SUB-GLOBAL ASSESSMENT NETWORK

MALAWI NATIONAL ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

Global Presentation of the Findings

Malawi's first national ecosystem assessment — the status and trends of terrestrial, aquatic and wetland ecosystems, the drivers of change, and what the evidence means for people, policy and development.

DELIVERED BY & WITH THE SUPPORT OF

UN environment programme | WCMC

NEA NATIONAL ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE

LILONGWE UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES (LUANAR)
Knowledge | Innovation | Excellence

SGA NETWORK

BESNet
Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network

Supported by:
Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
based on a decision of the German Bundestag

IKI INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE INITIATIVE

SwedBio
A programme at Stockholm Resilience Centre

THE WEBINAR

TODAY'S JOURNEY

From how the assessment was built, to what it found, to how its evidence can shape national planning and decision-making.

OPENING

OPENING REMARKS

Framing the assessment in Malawi's environmental policy agenda.

Lilian Chimphepo

Assessment Co-chair & Chief Environmental Officer, IPBES Focal Point, Environmental Affairs Department

01

THE ASSESSMENT

Scope, process, implementing arrangements and stakeholder engagement.

Alice Kammwamba

Assessment Project Manager & ILK Coordinator, LUANAR

02

THE FINDINGS

Status and trends, drivers of change, scenarios and implications for people.

Willie Sagona

Part A — Terrestrial

Mphatso Kalemba

Part B — Aquatic & wetland

03

WEAVING ILK

Lessons from community engagement, multiple evidence systems and knowledge co-production.

Alice Kammwamba

Assessment Project Manager & ILK Coordinator, LUANAR

04

EVIDENCE TO POLICY

Policy-relevant options and opportunities for national planning and decision-making.

Lilian Chimphepo

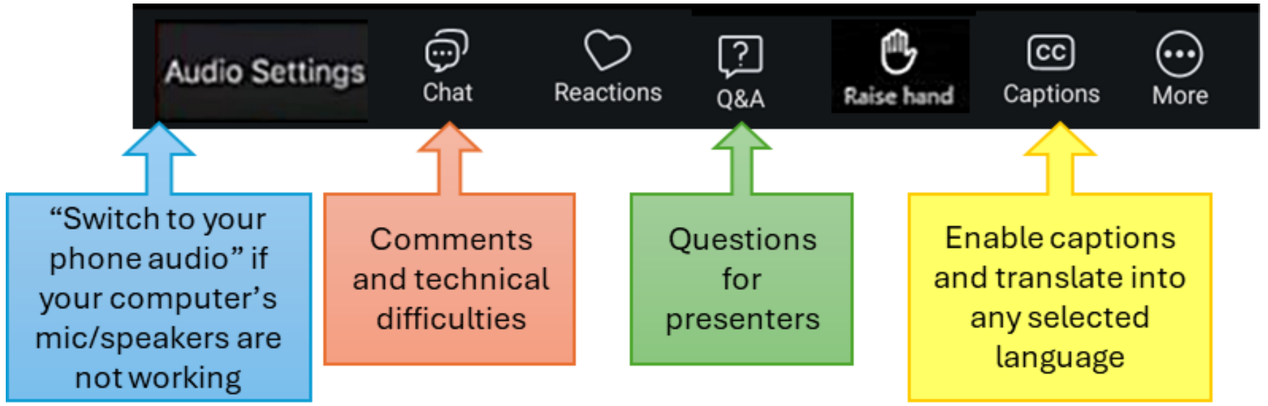
Assessment Co-chair & Chief Environmental Officer, Environmental Affairs Department

20' Panel discussion & Q&A — moderated by Noor Noor, UNEP- WCMC

5' Closing remarks & next steps — Juanita Chaves, UNEP-WCMC

BEFORE WE BEGIN

HOUSEKEEPING



RECORDING

This webinar is being recorded and will be uploaded to the NEA Initiative website and the UNEP-WCMC YouTube channel. Please let us know if you have any concerns.

MICROPHONE & CAMERA

All attendee microphones will remain muted throughout the webinar.

QUESTIONS

To comment or ask a question, please use the **Q&A feature** at the bottom of your screen.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

For any technical issues, please send a direct message to **Rita Dias** (UNEP-WCMC Events) via the chat.

BEFORE WE BEGIN

INTERPRETATION

This session has live interpretation in **French** and **Spanish**.

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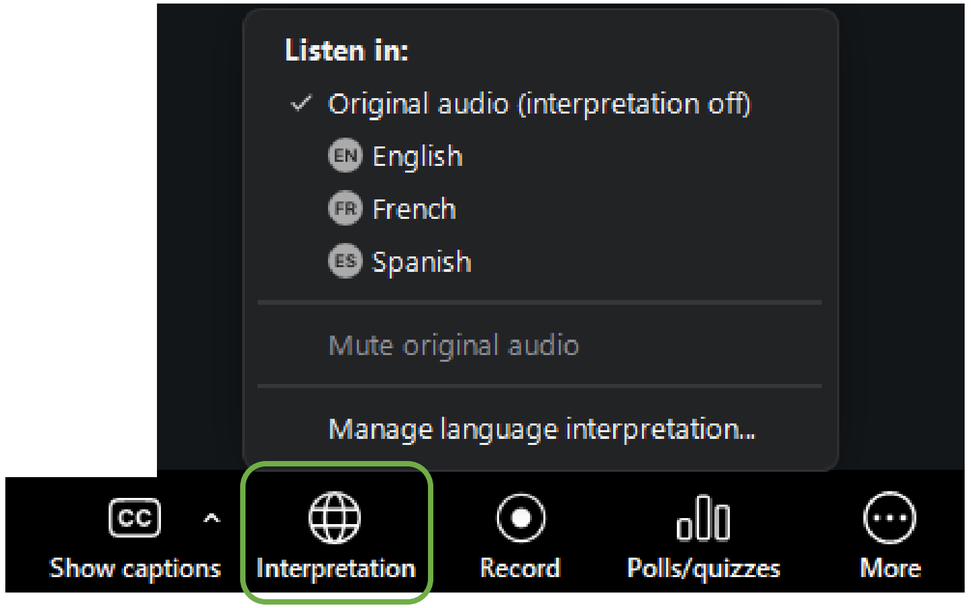
Click the **Interpretation** globe icon in your meeting toolbar.

2

Select your preferred language — English, French or Spanish.

3

Optionally mute the original audio to hear only the interpretation.



WELCOME

OPENING REMARKS

Lilian Chimphepo

Assessment Co-chair and Chief Environmental Officer, IPBES Focal Point,
Environmental Affairs Department, Ministry of Natural Resources, Malawi

01

OVERVIEW OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Scope, assessment process, implementing arrangements and stakeholder engagement.

Alice Kammwamba

Assessment Project Manager and Indigenous and Local Knowledge Coordinator, LUANAR

MALAWI AND THE NEA INITIATIVE

Since 2017, and building on over 20 years of ecosystem assessment experience, the NEA Initiative at UNEP-WCMC — with UNDP and UNESCO through BES-Net — has supported countries to conduct national ecosystem assessments.

2020

MALAWI JOINS THE INITIATIVE

Malawi commits to undertaking its first National Ecosystem Assessment, under the BES-Net Phase II project.

2026

FINDINGS LAUNCHED

The Technical Report and Summary for Policymakers are launched nationally and presented to a global audience.

3

ECOSYSTEMS ASSESSED

Terrestrial, aquatic and wetland ecosystems, and the five sectors they underpin.

Implemented by **LUANAR**, in collaboration with the **Environmental Affairs Department, Ministry of Natural Resources** , with technical support from the NEA Initiative, UNESCO and UNDP. Funded by the German Federal Ministry (BMUKN) through the International Climate Initiative (IKI) and SwedBio.

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IKI INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE INITIATIVE

SwedBio
A programme at Stockholm Resilience Centre

IMPLEMENTING ARRANGEMENTS

A national assessment delivered through partnership.

LEAD IMPLEMENTER

LUANAR

Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources — convened the author teams, ran the assessment process and led ILK engagement.

LILONGWE UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES (LUANAR)
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GOVERNMENT PARTNER

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Ministry of Natural Resources — policy linkage, IPBES focal point and the route into national planning.

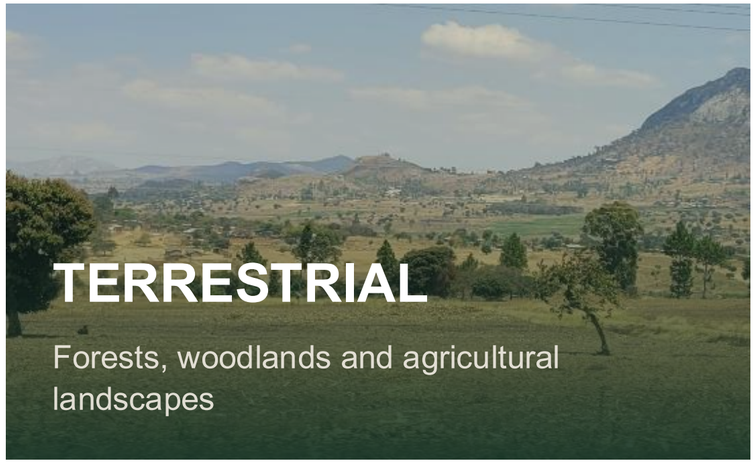
TECHNICAL SUPPORT

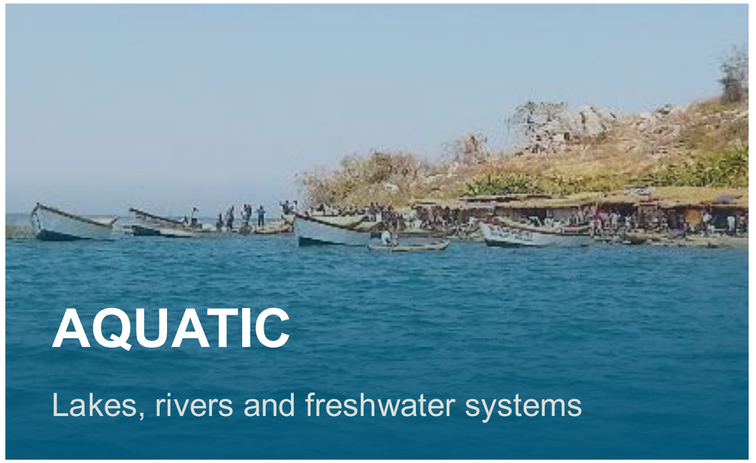
NEA INITIATIVE, UNEP-WCMC

With BES-Net consortium partners, and financial support from BMUKN through IKI.

SCOPE

Three ecosystems, assessed for their contribution to people and development.







KEY SECTORS SUPPORTED

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Fisheries
- Tourism
- Energy

The assessment also examines the **drivers of ecosystem change** — land-use change, deforestation, degradation, unsustainable resource use, pollution, invasive species and climate change.

OBJECTIVES

01

COLLABORATION

Strengthen collaboration among government, academia and communities to improve coordination and resource efficiency.

02

CO-PRODUCTION

Promote engagement in research and decision-making, enabling the co-production and use of knowledge across different actors.

03

EVIDENCE & AWARENESS

Support evidence-based decision-making for the sustained management of biodiversity, ecosystem services and livelihoods.

OUR VISION

NATIONAL POLICIES ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES INFORMED BY BOTH SCIENCE AND INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

A synthesis grounded in multiple forms of evidence.

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

Peer-reviewed research, national data and monitoring records on the status and trends of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

+

INDIGENOUS & LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge held by Indigenous Peoples and local communities and resource users, gathered through structured engagement across assessment sites.

DELIVERS

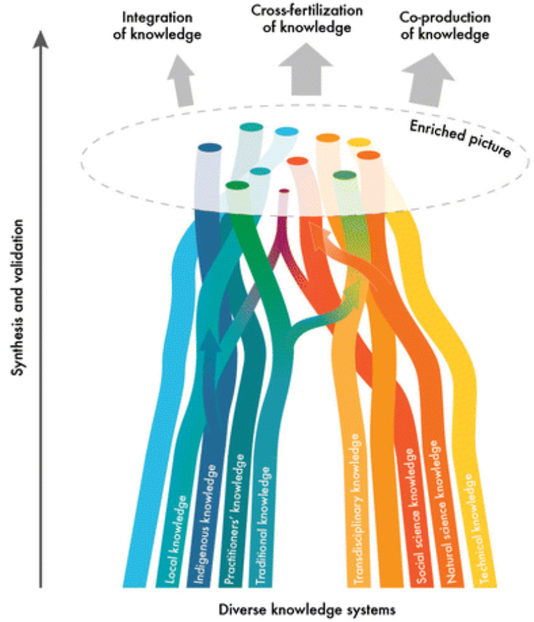
- Status & trends of biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Direct and indirect drivers of ecosystem change
- Future scenarios and implications for people and development

OUR APPROACH

Three ecosystems, a Multiple Evidence Base, and the IPBES conceptual framework.

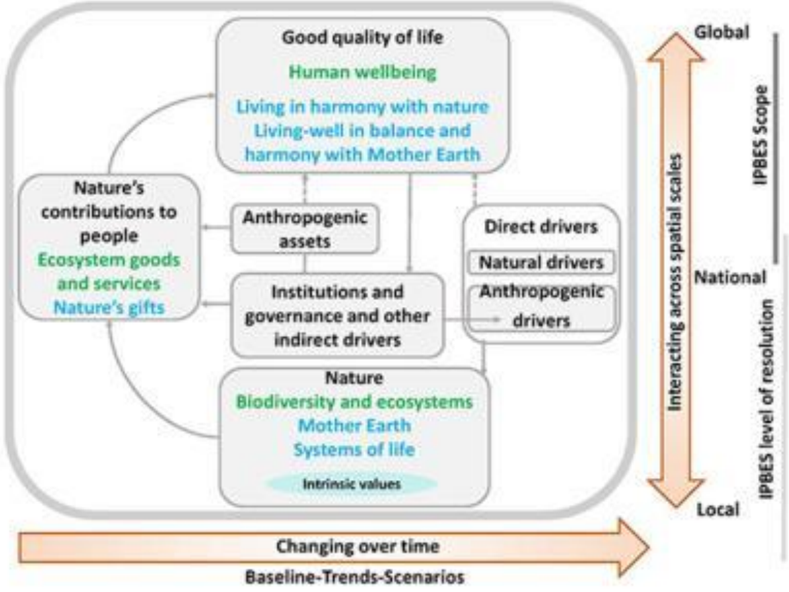
TERRESTRIAL | **AQUATIC** | **WETLANDS**

MULTIPLE EVIDENCE BASE



Science, Indigenous and Local Knowledge and other evidence sources are brought together — recognising where knowledge systems agree, differ or contradict, without forcing agreement.

IPBES CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Bringing diverse voices into the assessment process.

Government representatives & policymakers

Researchers & academic institutions

Civil society organisations

Indigenous Peoples and local communities

Private-sector actors

Development partners, media, students & youth



© Malawi National Ecosystem Assessment

Multiple knowledge systems and community participation, including Indigenous and Local Knowledge co-production, shaped both the process and the findings.

END OF SESSION

THANK YOU

Next: Main Findings and Key Messages from the Malawi National Ecosystem Assessment.

02

MAIN FINDINGS AND KEY MESSAGES

Status and trends of biodiversity and ecosystem services, drivers of change, future scenarios and implications for people.

PART A · TERRESTRIAL

Willie Sagona

Lead Author, Terrestrial chapter
Senior Forestry Research Officer, Forestry Research Institute of Malawi

PART B · AQUATIC & WETLAND

Mphatso Kalemba

Lead Author, Wetlands chapter

02 · MAIN FINDINGS · PART A

TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

Status and trends, drivers of change, key findings and implications for people — for Malawi's forests, woodlands, grasslands and agricultural landscapes.

Willie Sagona

Lead Author, Terrestrial chapter

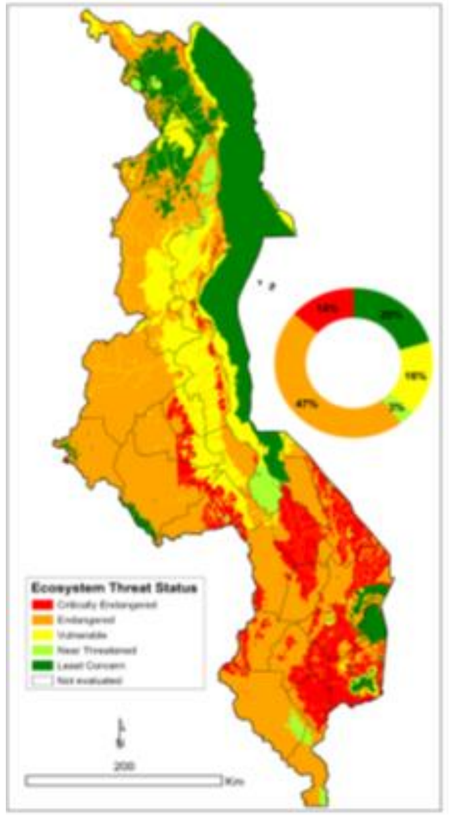
Senior Forestry Research Officer, Forestry Research Institute of Malawi



STATUS OF MALAWI'S TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

Malawi's terrestrial ecosystems — status, threats and conservation priorities.

THREAT STATUS



ECOSYSTEM THREAT STATUS



14%	Critically endangered
47%	Endangered
16%	Vulnerable
3%	Near threatened
20%	Least concern

THREAT PATTERNS, 2025

The highest threats occur in the **forest and mountain ecosystems** of northern and southern Malawi, while agricultural areas face **moderate land-use pressures** .

61%

of terrestrial ecosystems are **endangered or critically endangered** — the majority of the country's land area.

KEY ECOSYSTEMS

Forests, mountains, grasslands and agricultural landscapes support biodiversity, water resources, livelihoods and food security.

FORESTS

Mostly protected within reserves and national parks, but under severe pressure from logging, charcoal production and agricultural expansion. Miombo woodlands dominate. Forest cover declined from **47% in 1975** to **24% in 2020**.

MOUNTAINS

Biodiversity hotspots — including **Mulanje** and **Nyika** — and critical water catchments, increasingly threatened by deforestation, invasive species and climate change.

GRASSLANDS

Intact mainly in protected areas; elsewhere degraded by agricultural expansion, overgrazing, *dambo* cultivation and uncontrolled fires, leading to erosion and habitat loss.

AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Essential for livelihoods, but unsustainable practices — monocropping and shifting cultivation — are driving soil degradation and biodiversity loss.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Strengthen protected area management · promote sustainable land use · restore degraded ecosystems · enhance community-based forest governance and conservation.

02 · THE FINDINGS · TERRESTRIAL

RAPID FOREST LOSS

1975

47% → TODAY **24–36%**

Forest cover has fallen sharply, with deforestation increasing to **2.8% annually** — one of the highest rates in Southern Africa.

KEY DRIVERS

- Agricultural expansion
- Charcoal production
- Fuelwood extraction
- Illegal logging
- Population growth
- Settlement expansion



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BIODIVERSITY TRENDS

LAND TENURE & PROTECTION STATUS



- **15%** Customary land
- **11%** National parks & game reserves
- **10%** Forest reserves & protected hill slopes
- **64%** Other land uses

HABITATS

Habitat fragmentation, declining ecosystem services, soil erosion and watershed degradation — with growing threats to endemic species.

WILDLIFE

Many large mammals are declining through poaching and habitat loss, though reintroductions have increased black rhino and elephant numbers in **Majete** and **Liwonde**.

GRASSLANDS

Shrinking and degrading through cultivation, overgrazing, wetland (*dambo*) conversion and uncontrolled burning — especially outside protected areas.

AGROBIODIVERSITY

Maize monocropping dominates, but conservation agriculture, agroforestry, indigenous crops and community seed banks are improving resilience.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Strengthen forest protection · restore degraded habitats · improve wildlife conservation · promote sustainable land use · support climate-smart, biodiversity-friendly agriculture.

DRIVERS OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS

HABITAT LOSS & DEFORESTATION

Clearing for agriculture, settlements and infrastructure is the leading cause of decline, fragmenting habitats and threatening endemic species.

OVEREXPLOITATION

Heavy dependence on fuelwood, charcoal, timber and bushmeat, plus illegal wildlife trade, has depleted forests and threatened key species.



AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION

Encroachment into forests, continuous cultivation and maize monocropping degrade soils and reduce agrobiodiversity.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Alien and invasive plants — *Lantana camara* , black wattle, bracken fern — outcompete native species and reduce ecosystem integrity.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, droughts, floods and wildfires reduce resilience and shift species distributions — particularly in montane and miombo ecosystems.

WEAK GOVERNANCE & SOCIO-ECONOMIC PRESSURE

Population growth, poverty, biomass energy dependence, weak enforcement, limited capacity and unclear land tenure undermine protection.

PRIORITY RESPONSE

Strengthen forest governance, promote sustainable land use and energy alternatives, control invasive species, restore degraded habitats and expand community-based conservation.

KEY FINDINGS & POLICY MESSAGES

01 **Terrestrial ecosystems are vital national assets** , underpinning food security, livelihoods, water regulation, climate resilience, energy supply, tourism and economic growth.

02 **Biodiversity is declining rapidly** through deforestation, habitat conversion, agricultural expansion, charcoal production, overexploitation, invasive species, climate change and population pressure.

03 **Governance has improved** through participatory forest management, decentralisation and community co-management — but implementation is constrained by weak enforcement, limited resources and institutional capacity.

04 **Indigenous and Local Knowledge complements science** and strengthens conservation where it is integrated into natural resource management.

05 **Policy and legal frameworks** — NBSAP II, the Forest Policy, Wildlife Policy and Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy — provide a strong foundation, but need stronger implementation, coordination and sustainable financing.

06 **International agreements have largely been domesticated** through national legislation, permitting systems and community-based management, supporting Malawi's global biodiversity commitments.

07 **Critical knowledge gaps remain** in biodiversity monitoring, ecosystem mapping, socio-economic drivers, policy effectiveness and long-term ecological data.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Scale up ecosystem restoration · strengthen community-based governance · weave ILK with science · promote sustainable land-use planning · expand climate-smart agriculture · improve biodiversity monitoring — to achieve **Malawi 2063** and global biodiversity targets.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PEOPLE & DEVELOPMENT

LIVELIHOODS UNDER THREAT

Declining forests, grasslands and wildlife habitats reduce access to essential services — affecting food security, energy supply, clean water and income.

AGRICULTURAL RESILIENCE AT RISK

Biodiversity loss, soil degradation and reduced pollination and pest control weaken productivity and raise vulnerability to drought and flood.

WATER & CLIMATE REGULATION COMPROMISED

Forest and montane degradation reduces watershed protection and carbon storage, increasing flood, erosion and water-shortage risk.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS INCREASING

Sectors dependent on natural resources — agriculture, forestry, tourism and energy — face mounting exposure.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY RISING

Rural households dependent on forests and natural resources face declining availability alongside poverty and population growth.

RESTORATION IS AN OPPORTUNITY

Protecting forests and restoring landscapes can strengthen climate resilience, livelihoods and long-term economic benefit — with inclusive governance and ILK at the centre.

OVERALL IMPLICATION

HEALTHY TERRESTRIAL, AQUATIC AND WETLAND ECOSYSTEMS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO MALAWI'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN WELL-BEING AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MALAWI 2063.

02 · MAIN FINDINGS · PART B

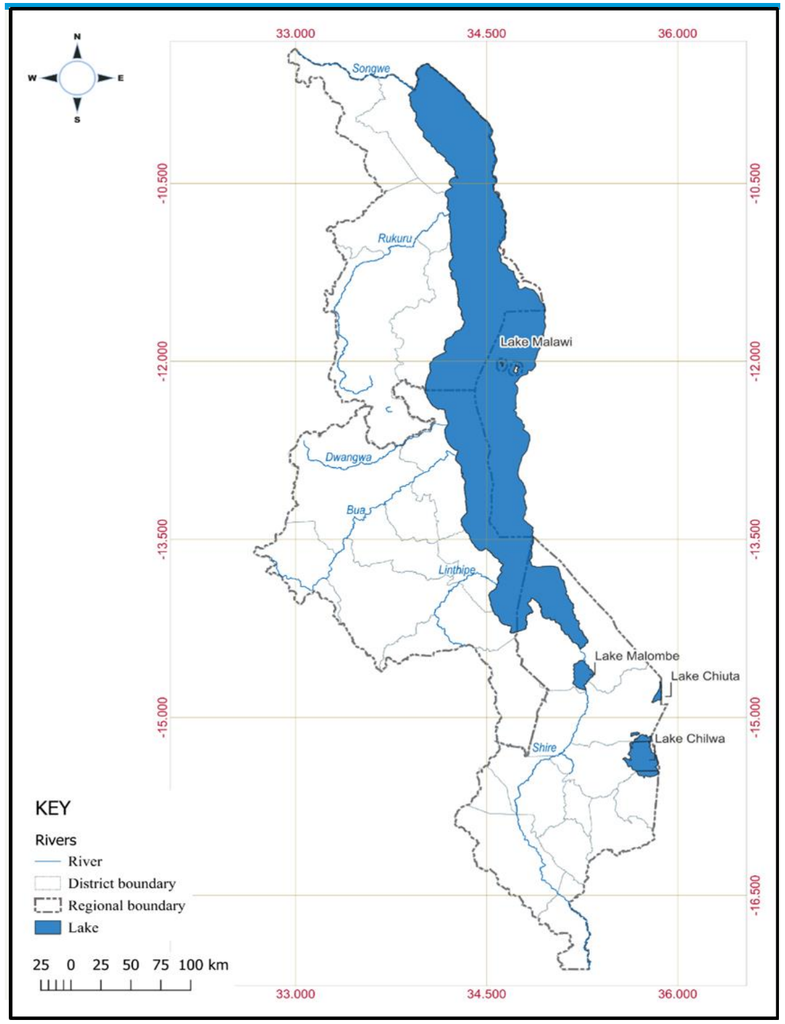
AQUATIC & WETLAND ECOSYSTEMS

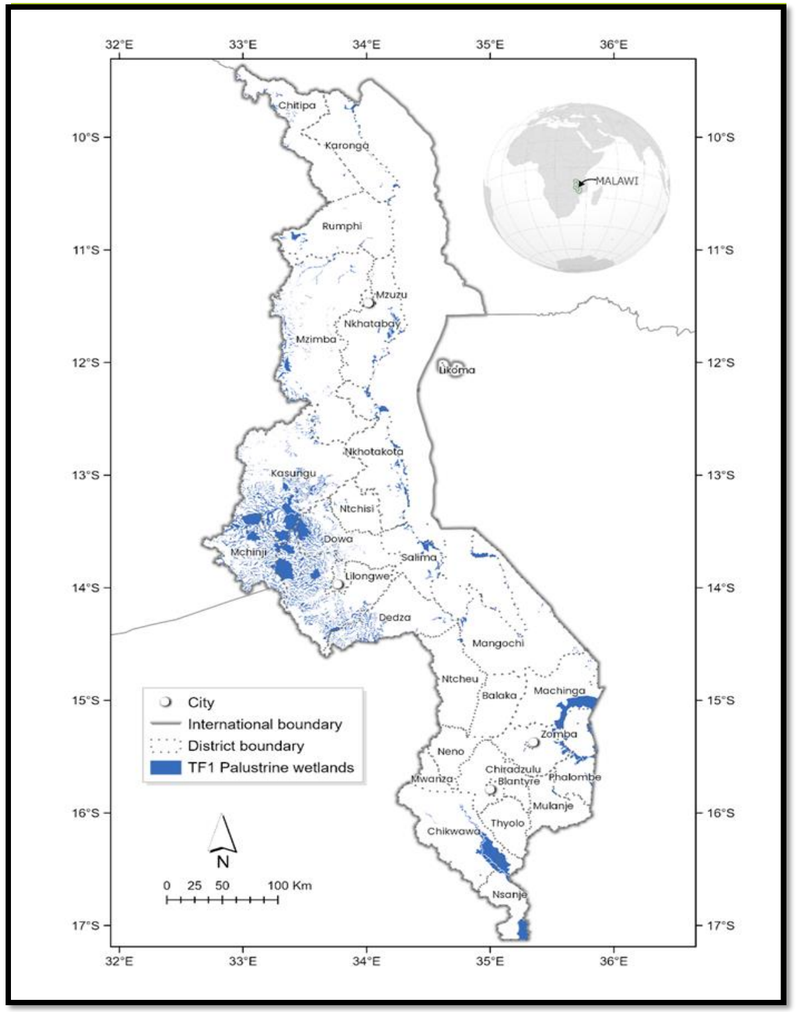
Key findings from the National Ecosystem Assessment — for Malawi's lakes, rivers, floodplains, marshes, dambos and swamps.

Mphatso Martha Kalemba

Lead Author, Aquatic & Wetland chapter

DISTRIBUTION OF AQUATIC & WETLAND ECOSYSTEMS





AQUATIC

Lakes and rivers.

WETLANDS

Shallow water bodies, including dambos.

WHY AQUATIC & WETLAND ECOSYSTEMS MATTER

AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

20%
OF MALAWI'S SURFACE AREA

1.6m+
LIVELIHOODS SUPPORTED

60–70%
OF ANIMAL PROTEIN

- Include Lake Malawi, Lake Chilwa, Lake Malombe and major river systems

WETLANDS

2
INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT RAMSAR SITES

- Cover a significant portion of Malawi
- Include floodplains, marshes, dambos and swamps
- Provide flood regulation, fisheries, water purification, carbon storage and livelihoods

Healthy aquatic and wetland ecosystems are essential for biodiversity, climate resilience and economic development in Malawi.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The pressures driving change across both ecosystem types.

AQUATIC

- Sedimentation increasing
- Water quality declining
- Nutrient pollution and eutrophication
- Overfishing reducing fish stocks
- Invasive alien species expanding
- Climate variability increasing vulnerability

WETLANDS

- Agricultural expansion
- Siltation
- Pollution
- Overexploitation
- Hydrological alteration
- Climate change

WHAT IS BEING IMPACTED?

BIODIVERSITY

- Declining fish populations
- Habitat degradation
- Threatened endemic species

LIVELIHOODS

- Reduced fisheries
- Lower agricultural productivity
- Loss of household income

WATER SECURITY

- Reduced water quality
- Increased flooding
- Altered hydrology

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

- Reduced carbon storage
- Less natural flood protection
- Greater vulnerability to climate change

KEY FINDINGS ON GOVERNANCE

STRENGTHS

- Strong legislation for fisheries and environmental management
- Community-based resource management
- Rich Indigenous and Local Knowledge

GAPS

- Weak enforcement
- Fragmented institutions
- Limited financing
- ILK insufficiently integrated
- No dedicated national wetland policy

OPPORTUNITIES

- Integrated ecosystem management
- Nature-based solutions
- Ecosystem restoration
- Stronger co-management
- Better monitoring

END OF SESSION

THANK YOU

Next: Weaving Indigenous and Local Knowledge and Stakeholder Perspectives.

03

WEAVING INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

Lessons from community engagement, multiple evidence systems and knowledge co-production.

Alice Kammwamba

Assessment Project Manager and Indigenous and Local Knowledge Coordinator, LUANAR

OUR APPROACH

Weaving science and Indigenous and Local Knowledge through a Multiple Evidence Base.

SCIENCE

Peer-reviewed research, national data and monitoring records.

INDIGENOUS & LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge held by Indigenous Peoples and local communities and resource users.

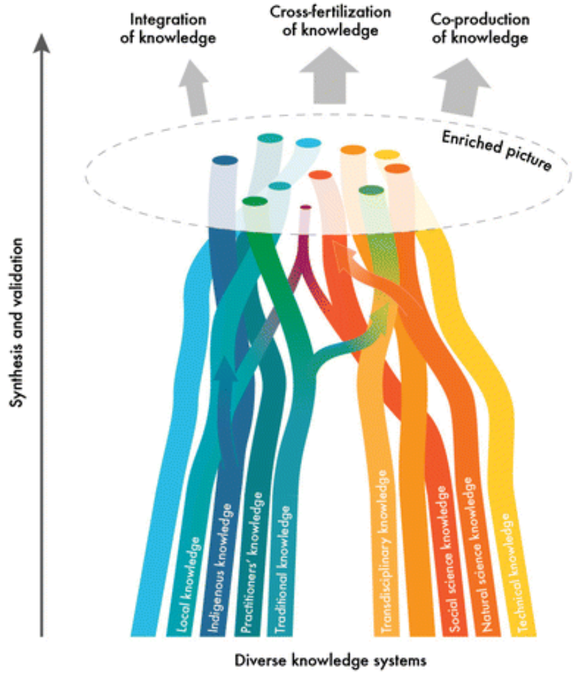
OTHER EVIDENCE SOURCES

Grey literature, practitioner records and institutional knowledge.

MULTIPLE EVIDENCE BASE

WHERE KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AGREE, DIFFER OR CONTRADICT — WITHOUT FORCING AGREEMENT.

> Applied within the **IPBES framework** , this produces richer, more inclusive evidence for decision-making.



THE ILK ENGAGEMENT PIPELINE

From scoping to uptake — ILK was built into every stage of the assessment.

500+
ILK HOLDERS ENGAGED

6
POTENTIAL ILK SITES IDENTIFIED

3
DOCUMENTARIES PRODUCED

SCOPING

- 3 framing workshops
- Community dialogues
- Trialogue
- Mapping ILK holders
- ILK themes & research questions

EVALUATION

- Community dialogues
- Walking workshops
- Literature review
- Interviews & focus groups
- Field ILK data collection
- Weaving ILK with science

REVIEW

- Feedback sessions
- ILK scenario building
- ILK case studies
- ILK Working Group established
- 11 ILK authors and fellows
- Dedicated ILK reviewers

APPROVAL

- National Biodiversity Advisory Committee
- ILK representative onboarded to the Committee

UPTAKE

- National ILK Outlook publication
- Human Rights-Based Approach case study

03 · WEAVING KNOWLEDGE

ILK THEMES IDENTIFIED

01 Linkage between cultural practices and biodiversity conservation

02 Co-management and co-governance of natural resources

03 Traditional early warning systems for disaster risk reduction

03 Community intergenerational knowledge transfer systems

05 Drivers of the loss of ILK and traditional practices

06 Multiple values of nature to Indigenous Peoples and local communities — cultural, spiritual and medicinal, and the rules governing their use



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FRAMING WORKSHOPS

Working with Indigenous and Local Knowledge at the scoping stage — three framing workshops set the ILK themes and research questions that shaped the assessment.







ILK HOUSEHOLD DIALOGUES WITH ELDERS

Meeting knowledge holders where they live — recording the knowledge held by elders and families across the assessment sites.











EMPOWERING ILK HOLDERS — THE TRIALOGUE

Bringing Indigenous and Local Knowledge holders, scientists and policymakers into the same room, so knowledge holders speak directly to decision-makers.


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WALKING WORKSHOPS

Documenting knowledge in place — ILK holders led the assessment team through the landscapes they steward.



SIX POTENTIAL ILK SITES IDENTIFIED

Mbenje Island · Navingozi · Mtsinja · Nsanje · Kazuni · Vwaza


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03 · WEAVING KNOWLEDGE

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Site-based evidence of knowledge co-production. Six potential ILK sites were identified — Mbenje Island, Navingozi, Mtsinja, Nsanje, Kazuni and Vwaza.

KHULUBVI SACRED FOREST, NSANJE

The *Tchukulumwe* — women who perform sacrifice offerings at the M'bona shrine — sustain the spiritual laws that protect the entire forest ecosystem.

MBENJE ISLAND, SALIMA

Traditional chiefs enforce a closed season from December to April. Women sustain fish processing, marketing and knowledge of breeding cycles.

LAKE CHILWA, ZOMBA

Communities use *Chaone* — sacred sites — as de facto fish sanctuaries, passed down across generations.

NAVINGOZI FOREST, SALIMA

Women led a successful regeneration of this community forest — from degraded land back to a thriving ecosystem.



© Malawi National Ecosystem Assessment

03 · CASE IN DEPTH

ILK HOLDERS AS SPIRITUAL CUSTODIANS AT KHULUBVI

At the Khulubvi Sacred Forest in Nsanje, women hold specific and powerful governance roles.

Our walking workshop documented the ***Tchukulumwe*** — a designated group of women who help perform the sacrifice offerings at the M'bona shrine. This is central to maintaining the spiritual laws that protect the entire forest ecosystem.

> **BY ENSURING THE SPIRITS ARE HONOURED, THESE WOMEN DIRECTLY ENABLE THE CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY.**

LESSONS LEARNED

1

ILK HAS REAL POTENTIAL BUT IS OFTEN IGNORED

Recognising ILK and local structures within existing environmental policy allows communities to contribute meaningfully to conservation. Cultural beliefs and practices, upheld by traditional leaders, continue to shape outcomes.

2

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER IS DECLINING, BUT REVIVAL IS POSSIBLE

Intergenerational transfer is a strong tool for successful conservation and can be integrated with science for future generations. Recognising the value of each knowledge system is key to effective transdisciplinary work.

3

CO-MANAGEMENT PLUS ILK IS A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Combining formal co-management schemes with ILK input consistently produces stronger conservation outcomes.

CHALLENGES & GAPS

What communities and stakeholders told us.

EXCLUSION FROM DECISION-MAKING

Tokenistic participation of women; benefit-sharing follows a contributory model that discriminates against women.

LOSS OF ILK TRANSMISSION

Modernisation, formal education and religious influence are leading younger generations to devalue traditional knowledge.

WEAK ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

Communities lack information on project decisions, and there is no compensation for human–wildlife conflict.

LOW FEMALE REPRESENTATION

11%

of protected area staff are women — limiting who can benefit from capacity building.

68% **OF POLICIES MENTION ILK — BUT INCLUSION REMAINS WEAK IN PRACTICE.**

UPTAKE

The national launch of NBSAP III, the National Ecosystem Assessment reports and the 7th National Report — bringing together government, authors, partners and communities.



NATIONAL LAUNCH

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LAUNCH ADDRESS

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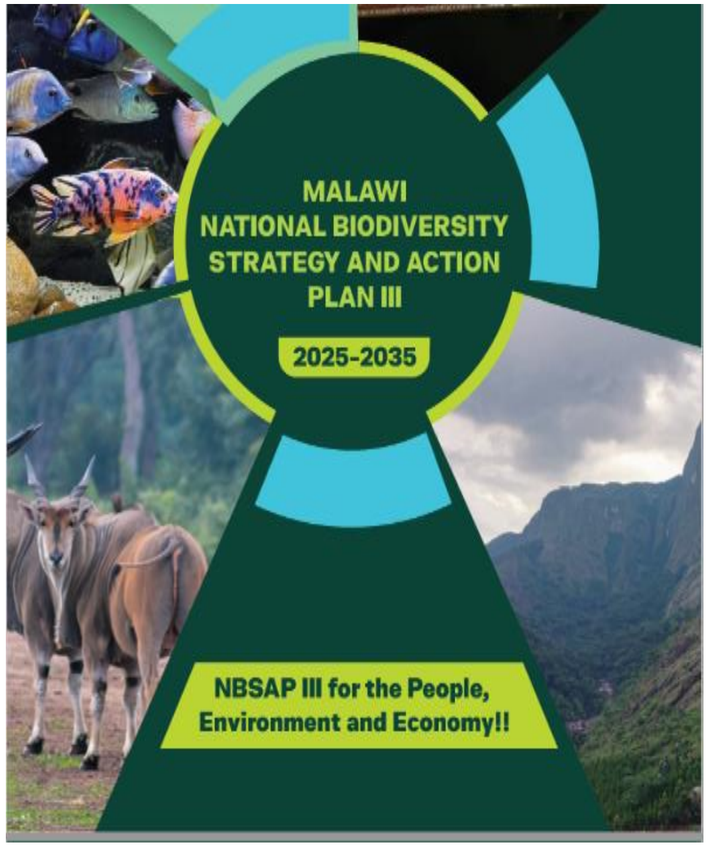
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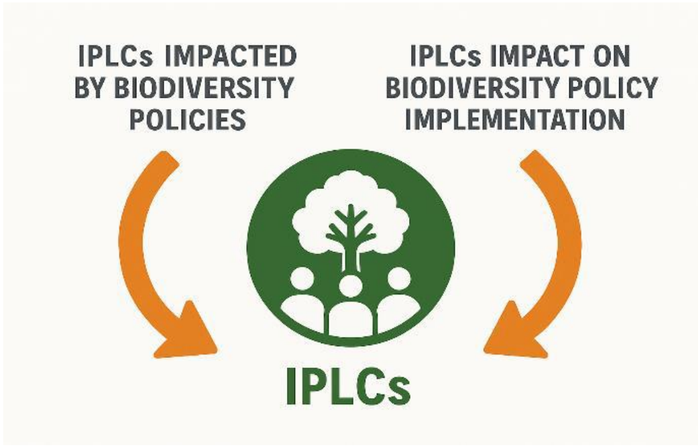


COMMUNITIES AT THE LAUNCH

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES & LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND BIODIVERSITY POLICY





IPLCS IMPACTED BY BIODIVERSITY POLICIES

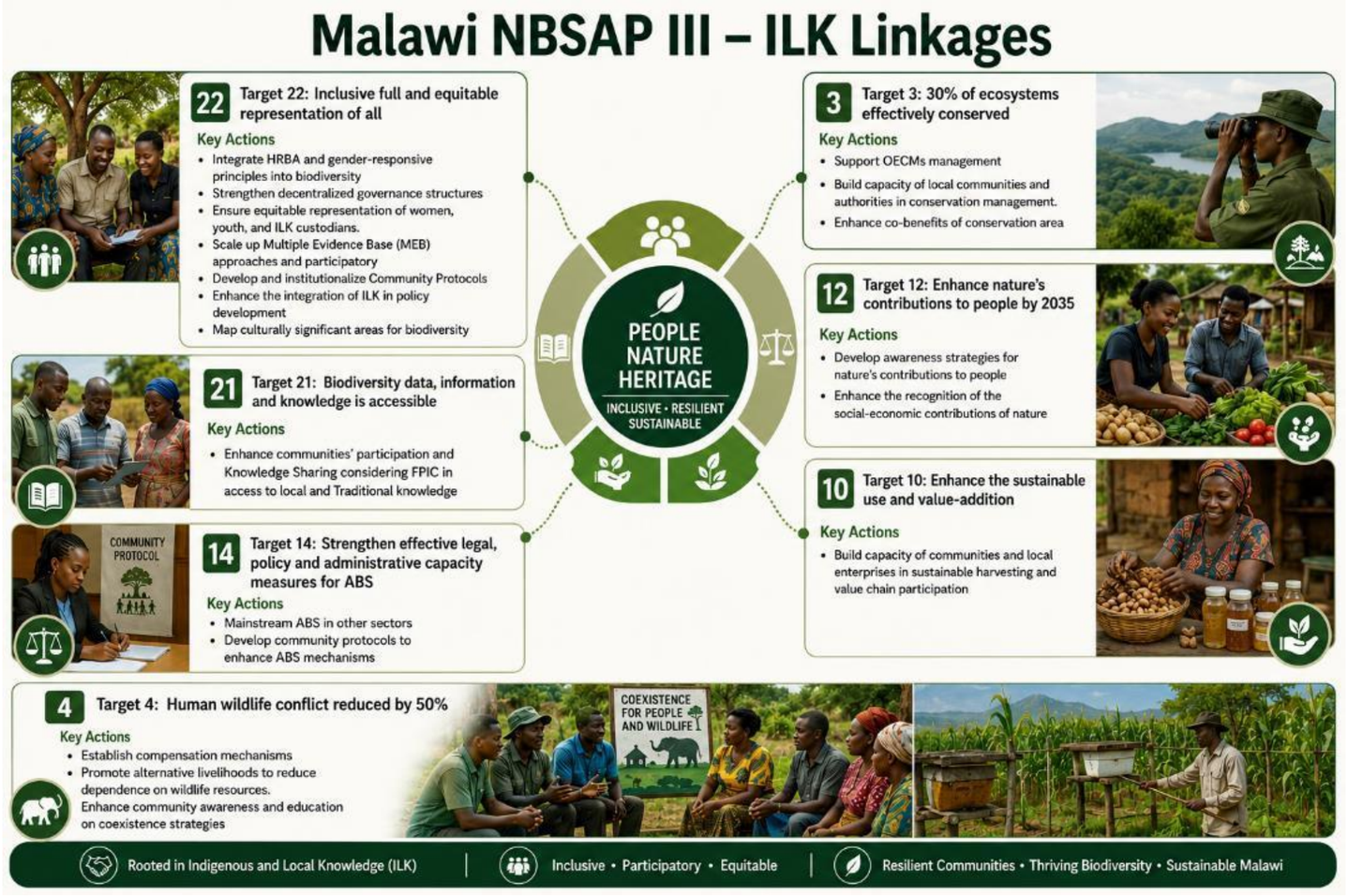
- Biodiversity policies directly affect the **lives, rights, livelihoods, cultures and traditional practices** of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- Decisions on protected areas, resource access, land use, conservation regulations and benefit-sharing can either **support or undermine** community well-being.

IPLCS IMPACT ON BIODIVERSITY POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- IPLCs are **not passive beneficiaries or victims** of policy — they are active agents in implementing biodiversity policies on the ground.
- Through Indigenous and Local Knowledge, customary governance, traditional conservation practices and stewardship of ecosystems, IPLCs **contribute directly to achieving biodiversity goals**.

MALAWI NBSAP III — ILK LINKAGES

Seven targets of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan III (2025–2035) carry explicit Indigenous and Local Knowledge linkages.



03 · PATH FORWARD

A TWO-WAY RELATIONSHIP

Communities are not passive beneficiaries of biodiversity policy — they are active agents in implementing it.

01

POLICIES SHAPE COMMUNITIES

Decisions on protected areas, resource access, land use and benefit-sharing directly affect the lives, rights, livelihoods and traditional practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

02

COMMUNITIES SHAPE POLICY

Through Indigenous and Local Knowledge, customary governance and stewardship of ecosystems, communities contribute directly to achieving national and global biodiversity goals.

WEAVING ILK WITH SCIENCE IS NOT OPTIONAL — IT IS REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION.

PUBLICATIONS

National Indigenous and Local Knowledge Outlook of biodiversity

Malawi National Ecosystem Assessment Technical Report and Summary for Policymakers

Human Rights-Based Approaches in biodiversity conservation

Women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities in inputs in NBSAP and the 7th National Report submitted to the CBD — contributing to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

END OF SESSION

THANK YOU

Next: From Evidence to Policy and Implementation.

04

FROM EVIDENCE TO POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Policy-relevant options and opportunities to use the assessment findings in national planning and decision-making.

Lilian Chimphepo

Assessment Co-chair and Chief Environmental Officer, Environmental Affairs Department, Ministry of Natural Resources, Malawi

KEY FINDINGS RELEVANT TO POLICY

Three sets of findings with direct policy consequences.

A · DRIVERS OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS

01

OVER-EXPLOITATION

02

HABITAT LOSS

04

CLIMATE CHANGE

04

POLLUTION





KEY FINDINGS RELEVANT TO POLICY

B · IMPLEMENTATION GAPS

Policies exist, but **co-management is largely nominal** in practice.

There is **no stand-alone wetland policy**.

ILK inclusion is weak — recognition on paper has not translated into practice.

C · CROSS-SECTOR CONFLICT

Agriculture, forestry and water are managed separately , with limited coordination across mandates.

Fragmented effort creates **duplication and inefficiency** — and leaves ecosystems governed in pieces.



THE IMPLICATION

ECOSYSTEMS DO NOT FOLLOW SECTOR BOUNDARIES. NEITHER SHOULD THE POLICIES THAT GOVERN THEM.

POLICY OPTIONS

Four routes to turn the assessment's evidence into governance that works.

01 STRENGTHEN POLICY COHERENCE & COORDINATION

Align mandates across agriculture, forestry, fisheries and water so ecosystems are governed as whole systems.

02 MAINSTREAM ILK & COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

Move co-management from nominal to substantive, recognising customary institutions as part of the governance system.

04 INTEGRATE THE NEA INTO SECTOR PLANNING

Embed the findings in sector policies, development plans and district-level land-use planning.

04 STRENGTHEN MONITORING, ENFORCEMENT & CAPACITY

Close the data and capability gaps that currently limit implementation and accountability.

OPPORTUNITIES TO USE THE FINDINGS

Entry points already open in Malawi's planning and reporting calendar.

01

REVISION OF NBSAP II

The 2015–2025 strategy is due for renewal — the assessment supplies its evidence base.

02

PREPARATION OF THE NSEOR

National State of Environment and Outlook Report — a direct home for assessment findings.

04

THE 7TH NATIONAL REPORT

Reporting to the CBD, contributing to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

04

SECTOR POLICY REVISION WITH ILK

Revise Forest, Agriculture and Fisheries policies to recognise Indigenous and Local Knowledge.

05

LOCAL LAND-USE PLANS

Develop district and community land-use plans using the assessment's maps.

06

BRIDGE COMMITMENT AND PRACTICE

Close the distance between what policy promises and what happens on the ground.

THE NEA IS NOT JUST A REPORT. IT IS A DECISION-SUPPORT TOOL.

INSTITUTIONALISE

Embed NEA findings in biodiversity conservation planning cycles.

PRIORITISE

Policy coherence, Indigenous and Local Knowledge, and sustainable funding.

SHIFT

From procedural to substantive participation of communities in decision-making.

RESULT

BETTER GOVERNANCE OF NATURE — FOR FOOD SECURITY, CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

END OF SESSION

ZIKOMO

Thank you. We welcome your questions and reflections in the discussion to follow.

OPEN DISCUSSION · 20 MINUTES

PANEL DISCUSSION & Q&A

An open conversation with our presenters on opportunities for uptake, implementation, financing, partnerships and peer-to-peer learning.

- Uptake
- Implementation
- Financing
- Partnerships
- Peer-to-peer learning

Please use the **Q&A feature** at the bottom of your screen. Moderated by UNEP-WCMC.

TO CLOSE

CLOSING REMARKS AND NEXT STEPS

Juanita Chaves

UNEP-WCMC · National Ecosystem Assessment Initiative

Priorities and next steps for dissemination, uptake, implementation, partnerships and continued knowledge generation.

EXPLORE THE EVIDENCE

DOWNLOAD THE ASSESSMENT

Access the full outputs of the Malawi National Ecosystem Assessment — scan a QR code or visit ecosystemassessments.net.

FULL ASSESSMENT

TECHNICAL REPORT

The complete evidence base — terrestrial, aquatic and wetland ecosystems, their condition, trends, drivers and implications for people.

SCAN OR VISIT

ecosystemassessments.net/content//uploads/2026/07/FOR-PUBLISHING-NATIONAL-ECOSYSTEM-ASSESSEMENT-REPORT-DESIGN.pdf

FOR DECISION-MAKERS

SUMMARY FOR POLICYMAKERS

The concise, policy-focused synthesis of the assessment's key messages and the options they open up.

SCAN OR VISIT

ecosystemassessments.net/content//uploads/2026/06/MALAWI_NATIONAL-ECOSYSTEM-ASSESSMENT-SPM_final.pdf

JOIN THE COMMUNITY

SGA NETWORK

THE SUB-GLOBAL ASSESSMENT NETWORK

A community of practice that connects and supports individuals and organisations involved in sub-global ecosystem assessments.

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SCAN TO JOIN & STAY UP TO DATE

NEXT IN THIS SERIES

THAILAND NATIONAL ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

Join us for the global presentation of the findings of Thailand's National Ecosystem Assessment.

DATE

26 August 2026

TIME

09:00–10:15

British Summer Time

REGISTER

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XrdD9e5bQE-e7C3jAYabBA

SCAN TO REGISTER

END OF WEBINAR

ZIKOMO

Thank you

To the assessment authors, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, government partners, technical partners and everyone who joined us today.

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