

Sustainable Development Goals (15/17)

15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

15 LIFE ON LAND



In this number...

Protected Land Areas in Spain and the EU

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The “Indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” is an operation within the National Statistical Plan, which is produced by INE in collaboration with the statistical services of the ministries. Its results can be viewed at: <https://www.ine.es/dyngs/ODS/es/index.htm>. Through Goal 15 countries commit to: 1) Ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services; 2) Promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and increase afforestation and reforestation globally; 3) Combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil; 4) Ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity; 5) Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, and protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species; 6) Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed; 7)

Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna; 8) Adopt measures to prevent the introduction of invasive alien species; 9) Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts; 10) Mobilise and significantly increase financial resources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems; 11) Mobilise significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management; and 12) Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species.

The global framework contains 14 indicators for the monitoring of Goal 15. Thirty-eight sub-indicators corresponding to the 14 global indicators have been published on the national SDG indicator platform. Thus, the coverage rate of the SDG 15 indicators is 100%.



The European indicator *Surface of terrestrial protected areas* comprises nationally designated land areas and Natura 2000 sites. A designated area at national level is an area protected by national legislation. The Natura 2000 network comprises marine and land protected areas designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives with the goal of maintaining or re-establishing a favourable conservation status for habitat types and species of EU interest. The European Biodiversity Strategy encourages the protection of at least 30% of land and marine areas, both nationally designated and within the Natura 2000 network. The source of the indicator is the European Environment Agency, with data provided by the Member States.

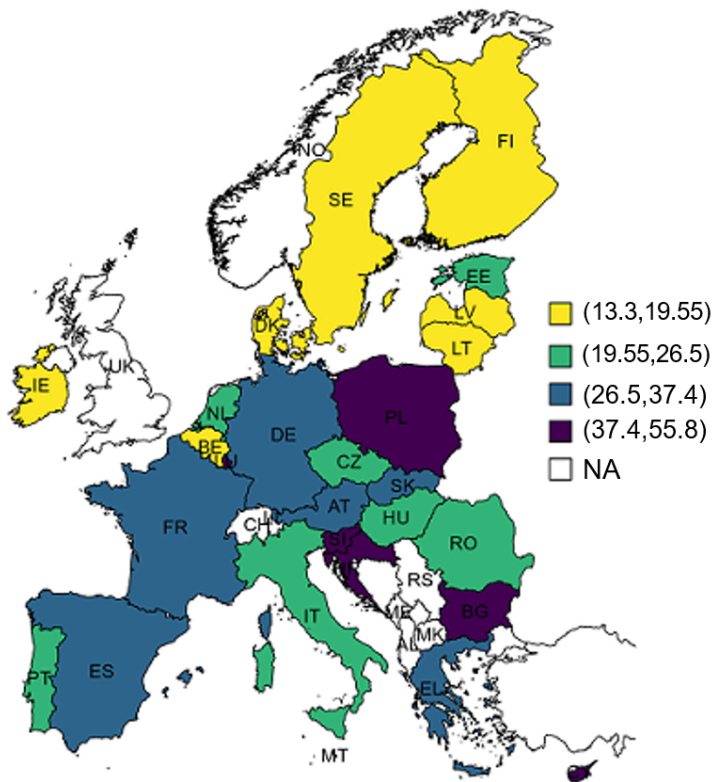
This European indicator is considered similar to global indicators 15.1.2 *Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type* and 15.4.1 *Coverage by protected areas of important sites for mountain biodiversity*.

In 2021, the European Union (EU 27) had 26.0% of land area protected, an increase of 6.3 percentage points compared to 2015 (19.7%).

The three countries with the highest percentage of protected land area in 2021 were Luxembourg, Bulgaria and Slovenia with 55.8%, 41.0% and 40.5% respectively. At the opposite end of the scale were Finland (13.3%), Ireland (13.9%) and Belgium (14.7%).

In 2021, the proportion of protected land area in Spain was 28%. In absolute terms, this corresponds to 141,623 km2, making Spain the country with the second largest protected land area after France.

Surface of terrestrial prototected areas. 2021 (%)



Source: Eurostat

Did you know...?

In 2021, the proportion of forest area in Spain in relation to the total area was 38.01%.

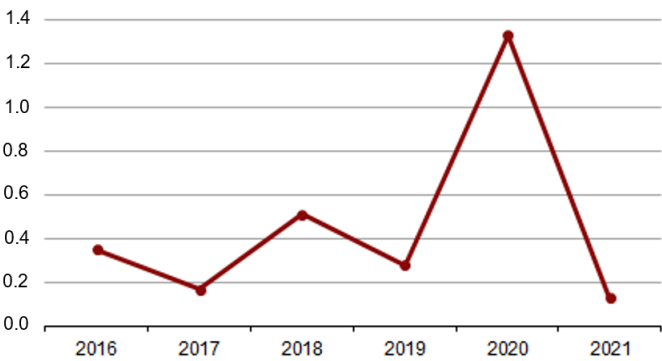
Sub-indicator 15.c.1.1 *Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked* measures the percentage of seized wildlife species from poaching or illegal trade (total seized species from illegal trade) out of the total number of traded wildlife species (total number of traded species from legal and illegal trade). The Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for this indicator.

During the period 2016-2021 the percentage of traded wildlife from poaching or illegal trade decreased by 0.22 percentage points, from 0.35% to 0.13%.

The highest percentage of this indicator (1.33%) was recorded in 2020, while the lowest proportion (0.13%) was recorded in 2021.



Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked (%)



Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs

Mountain Green Cover Index



Sub-indicator 15.4.2.1 *Mountain Green Cover Index* is defined as the percentage of vegetation cover over the total mountain area. Green cover is determined from the Spanish Forest Map which identifies the following land cover groups that have been taken into account for this indicator: woodland and sparse woodland, scattered and treeless woodland, crops, etc. The data source for the indicator is the Spanish Inventory of Natural Heritage and Biodiversity (IEPNB) of the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge. This statistic is a synthesis and analysis operation with results from different sources.

The Mountain Green Cover Index in Spain has decreased 0.28 percentage points in the period 2015-2018, from 97.17% to 96.89%.

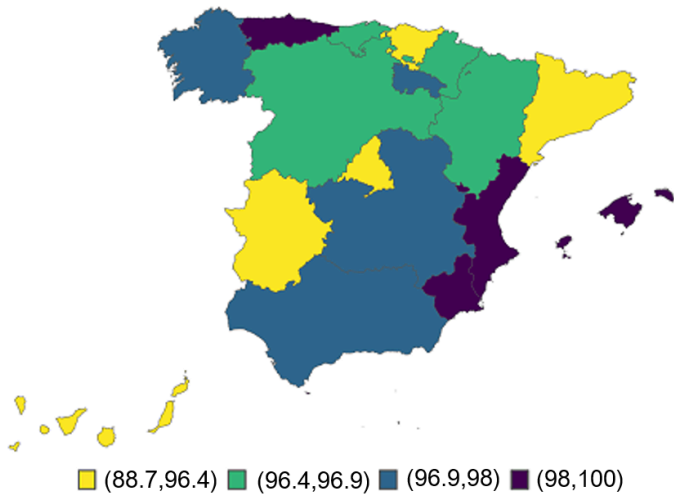
The three autonomous communities with the highest value of the Mountain Green Coverage Index in 2018 were Illes Balears (99.36%), Principado de Asturias (98.39%) and Comunitat Valenciana (98.08%). At the opposite end of the scale were Canarias (88.74%), Comunidad de Madrid (89.98%) and Cataluña (94.89%).

Did you know...?

In Spain in 2021 the Red List index was 0.89.

This index takes values between 0 and 1; the closer to 1, the better the status of the species, and the closer to 0, the closer to extinction.

Mountain green cover index. 2018
Percentage



Source: Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge



Global indicator 15.1.2 *Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type* uses the Spanish Inventory of Natural Heritage and Biodiversity (IEPNB) as the data source, based on the statistical operation of Natural Spaces or Areas of Interest for which the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MTED) is responsible. To calculate this indicator, the land cover classes correspond to the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) categories of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change incorporated into the Spanish Forest Map.

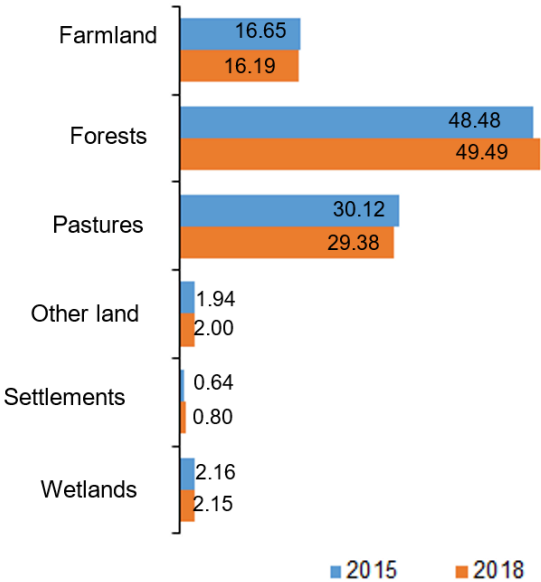
In Spain, the proportion of forests in protected areas (RN2000 and ENP) was 49.49% in 2018, which represented a growth of 1.01 percentage points compared to 2015.

During the same period, the share of settlements in protected areas grew by 0.16 percentage points (from 0.64% to 0.80%) and the proportion of other land grew by 0.06 percentage points (from 1.94% to 2.00%).

The proportion of grassland in protected areas decreased by 0.74 percentage points (from 30.12% in 2015 to 29.38% in 2018), while the proportion of farmland decreased by 0.46 percentage points (from 16.65% in 2015 to 16.19% in 2018). Furthermore, the proportion of wetlands in protected areas was 2.16% in 2015 and 2.15% in 2018.



Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem (%)



Source: Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge

Measuring progress on Goal 15



Progress in Spain on the SDG 15 subindicators is presented, distinguishing between short-term progress (latest year available compared to the previous year) and medium-term progress (since 2015, i.e. the baseline year). In both cases the compound annual growth rate has been used.

For indicators with positive normative direction (increases are desirable) we have: growth rates greater than or equal to 0.5% are considered progress (↑), rates in the range [0% - 0.5%) slight progress (↗), rates in the range [-0.5% - 0) slight decline (↘) and for rates less than -0.5%, a decline (↓). For indicators that do not evolve, ↔ is used.

For indicators with a negative normative direction, the categories are reversed.

Among the 32 sub-indicators shown in the table, in the medium term, 11 of them are progressing favourably, five have a slight setback and seven are regressing. In addition, seven show no progress or regression and two others cannot be assessed due to insufficient data.

In addition to those shown, there are six non-numerical sub-indicators (Spain has achieved the first five of these):

15.6.1.1. *Spain is a contracting party to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* for the entire period, and can therefore be considered to be in compliance.

15.6.1.2. *Spain is part of the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity* for the entire period, so it can be considered compliant.

15.6.1.3. *Spain has legislative, administrative and policy measures notified through the Online System of Notification on Compliance with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.* From 2020 onwards, it complies.

15.6.1.4. *Spain has legislative, administrative or policy measures reported to the Access and Benefit Sharing Clearing-House of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.*

15.8.1.1. *Spain has relevant national legislation in place and has allocated sufficient resources for the prevention or control of invasive alien species* for the whole period, and can therefore be considered compliant.

15.9.1.2. *Spain has integrated biodiversity into national accounting and reporting systems, defined as implementation of the Environmental and Economic Accounting System;* in this, Spain has not integrated it during the period under review, so it cannot be assessed as progress.

Subindicator	Unit	Last year	Last year's value	Medium-term progress	Short term progress
15.1.1.1. Forest area in proportion to total area	Percentage	2021	38.01	0.71% ↑	n.d.
15.1.2.1. Proportion of sites that are important for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, on farmland	Percentage	2018	16.19	-0.9% ↓	n.d.
15.1.2.2. Proportion of important sites that are important for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, in forests	Percentage	2018	49.49	0.7% ↑	n.d.
15.1.2.3. Proportion of sites that are important for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, in pastures	Percentage	2018	29.38	-0.8% ↓	n.d.
15.1.2.4. Proportion of sites that are important for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, in other types of lands	Percentage	2018	2.00	1.0% ↑	n.d.
15.1.2.5. Proportion of sites that are important for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, in settlements	Percentage	2018	0.80	7.7% ↓	n.d.
15.1.2.6. Proportion of sites that are important for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, in wetlands	Percentage	2018	2.15	-0.2% ↘	n.d.
15.2.1.1. Forest area with a sustainable forest management planning instrument in force, in hectares	Hectares	2018	5,167,697	3.9% ↑	n.d.
15.2.1.2. Forest area with a sustainable forest management planning instrument in force, as %	Percentage	2018	18.48	3.7% ↑	n.d.
15.3.1.1. Proportion of degraded land relative to total land area	Percentage	2018	18.20	0.0% ↔	n.d.
15.4.1.1. Places important for mountain biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, farmland	Percentage	2018	8.23	-1.6% ↓	n.d.
15.4.1.2. Places important for mountain biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, in forests	Percentage	2018	56.46	0.6% ↑	n.d.
15.4.1.3. Places important for mountain biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, in pastures	Percentage	2018	32.09	-0.8% ↓	n.d.
15.4.1.4. Places important for mountain biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, in other types of land	Percentage	2018	1.90	1.1% ↑	n.d.
15.4.1.5. Places important for mountain biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, in settlements	Percentage	2018	0.49	7.9% ↓	n.d.
15.4.1.6. Places important for mountain biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, in wetlands	Percentage	2018	0.84	-0.8% ↓	n.d.
15.4.2.1. Mountain Green Cover Index	Percentage	2018	96.89	-0.1% ↘	n.d.
15.5.1.1. Red List Index (total)	Index	2022	0.89	0.0% ↔	0.0% ↔
15.5.1.2. Red List Index (amphibians)	Index	2022	0.87	-0.4% ↘	0.0% ↔

15.5.1.3. Red List Index (birds)	Index	2022	0.95	0.0%	⇌	0.0%	⇌
15.5.1.4. Red List Index (invertebrates)	Index	2022	0.85	-0.4%	📉	-1.2%	📉
15.5.1.5. Red List Index (mammals)	Index	2022	0.93	0.0%	⇌	0.0%	⇌
15.5.1.6. Red List Index (fish)	Index	2022	0.93	-0.4%	📉	-1.1%	📉
15.5.1.7. Red List Index (non-vascular flora)	Index	2022	0.74	0.0%	⇌	0.0%	⇌
15.5.1.8. Red List Index (vascular flora)	Index	2022	0.87	0.0%	⇌	0.0%	⇌
15.5.1.9. Red List Index (reptiles)	Number	2022	0.83	0.8%	📈	2.5%	📈
15.6.1.5. Total reported number of standard material transfer agreements (SMTAs) transferring genetic plant resources for food and agriculture to the country	Index	2022	1,886	n.d.		n.d.	
15.7.1.1. Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked	Percentage	2021	0.13	-18.0%	📈	-90.2%	📈
15.9.1.1. Spain has established national goals in accordance with the second Aichi Target of the Strategic Plan for Biological Diversity 2011-2020 or similar goals in its national biodiversity strategies and action plans and has reported on its progress in achieving these goals	Index	2019	0.60	0.0%	⇌	n.d.	
15.a.1.1. Official development assistance and public spending for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems	Millions of euros	2020	59.94	11.6%	📈	-58.9%	📉
15.b.1.1. Official development assistance and public spending for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems	Millions of euros	2019	0.36	n.d.		n.d.	
15.c.1.1. Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked	Percentage	2021	0.13	-18.0%	📈	-90.2%	📈