



# TOWARDS POST-2020 EXPERTISE ON #32

## STRENGTHENING BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING IN OTHER SECTORS: OPTIONS FOR – AND AFTER – COP15



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**Mainstreaming biodiversity within all sectors and policies is necessary to address biodiversity loss. It must be done from local to international levels and involve all relevant stakeholders. Taking stock of past undertakings and thinking of the steps that can be taken before COP15 and after, for a stronger, large and effective implementation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is an imperative.**

Mainstreaming biodiversity in other sectors is a key challenge to implement the decisions taken at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Most drivers of biodiversity loss are linked to other socio-political and economic sectors, where change must occur to implement the CBD.

The Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) and the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework-EU support project organised on 6-7 April 2021 an online workshop between negotiators, experts, and other stakeholders. It focused on reaching a better understanding of the progress made so far and related difficulties in mainstreaming biodiversity.

The dialogue also presented a reflection on the opportunities before and after COP15 to strengthen mainstreaming strategically and in its implementation.

**[WE WILL ENSURE THAT OUR RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT HEALTH AND ECONOMIC CRISIS IS GREEN AND JUST AND CONTRIBUTES DIRECTLY TO RECOVERING BETTER AND ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES; WE COMMIT TO PUTTING BIODIVERSITY, CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT AS A WHOLE AT THE HEART BOTH OF OUR COVID-19 RECOVERY STRATEGIES AND INVESTMENTS AND OF OUR PURSUIT OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION.]**

Leaders' Pledge for Nature

Caption photo  
The Lena Delta Reserve is the most extensive protected wilderness area in Russia. Ust'-Lenskiy Zapovednik, Sakha Republic, Russia © USGS

# 1. TAKING STOCK OF PAST UNDERTAKINGS: THE NEED FOR A STRONGER MOBILISATION AND COHERENCE OF PARTIES

## ENSURING INCLUSIVENESS

Mainstreaming has been on the agenda of the CBD community for almost 20 years<sup>1</sup>. It was explicitly present in the first Strategic Plan 2002-2010 of the Convention. The first related decision was adopted in 2004, although at that time the purpose was rather to enhance synergies and coherence and develop cooperation with other conventions or international organisations. No less than 36 decisions on mainstreaming have been adopted since then. Ten of them aim at improving synergies and cooperation, while 26 address biodiversity integration issues in various sectors, mostly agriculture/forests<sup>2</sup> and climate change<sup>3</sup>. From 1996 to 2019, the CBD Secretariat developed about 250 partnerships with organisations including other conventions (e.g., Bern, Ramsar, CITES, CMS), sectoral intergovernmental organisations (e.g., FAO, UNCTAD, UNIDO) or institutes, foundations, universities, research centres, and national agencies. After the failure of the first Strategic Plan, Parties adopted the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 with its 20 Aichi Targets, many of which have strong mainstreaming implications.

Yet, all these endeavours have failed to produce the expected effects. While the Aichi Targets largely inspired the Sustainable Development Goals, biodiversity remains a siloed issue internationally and in most national contexts. The implementation of the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 failed to effectively involve both the various policy sectors impacting and/or depending on biodiversity, and the business companies in supporting the CBD process and implementation. The lack of consideration granted to biodiversity outside the environmental arena and in large policies and strategies, and the numerous policies and incentives that are harmful to biodiversity<sup>4</sup> also account for this failure. Decisions of the COPs and Secretariat partnerships have, to a large extent, suffered from a lack of consistent monitoring and accountability mechanism<sup>5</sup> involving Parties more strongly. The weakness of accountability mechanisms for biodiversity has impaired the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 more generally, which also undermined mainstreaming.

## MAKING GLOBAL SYNERGIES

As discussions during the workshop showed, mainstreaming can be approached in various ways. Considerable energy has been deployed to coordinate, harmonise, find and improve synergies with other multilateral environment

agreements (MEAs)<sup>6</sup>. In this respect, many useful conclusions have been drawn from the Bern II workshop and stand in its report<sup>7</sup>.

Coordination and synergies among secretariats are indeed important, and should be enhanced, but the mobilisation of Parties is essential particularly at national level, to ensure coherence with the international level. National focal points and other CBD negotiators can have a critical role in this endeavour when engaging in talks with counterparts of other conventions, or international organisations<sup>8</sup>. Establishing a continuous dialogue with counterparts in sectors with high biodiversity stakes could prove promising, particularly where programming instruments exist and can be coordinated, such as in climate change (NBSAPs/ NDCs) or the fight against desertification. Capacity building and resources should facilitate such an evolution and could be earmarked for such purposes. Stronger collaboration between international expertise bodies is also needed<sup>9</sup>.

# 2. ENGAGING OTHER SECTORS MORE PROACTIVELY TO OPERATIONALISE MAINSTREAMING

Exchanges during the workshop have helped identify several aspects that enable the operationalisation of biodiversity mainstreaming.

## QUALITY OUTREACH

One of the most important ones relates to reaching out to various partners and to creating dynamics to engage with other sectors. The case for biodiversity through the contributions it can make to development and societal issues comes in as an important point. Experience shows that these contributions are quite often either ignored or largely underestimated. The Covid-19 pandemic is a good example: healthy ecosystems, where human disturbances are limited, are protective of human health<sup>10</sup>. Climate mitigation and adaptation policies can rely, to a large extent, on nature-based solutions. In agriculture, what hinders the adoption of biodiversity friendly practices is also the limited knowledge that producers have of these practices. Triggering the interest of actors of various sectors, including finance ministries and the financial sector will be succeeded by putting the emphasis on the role that biodiversity can play in finding solutions to development issues. While seeking to attract the interest of partners on nature-based solutions to development issues, great care should be put on the quality and credibility of information provided. The workshop discussions widely acknowledged that the development and use of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA)<sup>12</sup> can play a role in raising awareness on biodiversity values.



Okavango River, Botswana  
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<sup>1</sup> We borrow the following definition of mainstreaming from the Long Term Approach to Mainstreaming Biodiversity (Document CBD/SBI/3/13 page 13): transform the mechanisms that steer development as well as business and investment decisions through profound changes in order to integrate biodiversity into development, climate change mitigation and adaptation and economic sectors and strive towards net positive impacts on ecosystems and species. To achieve this, the multi-faceted values of nature need to be reflected in all decision-making and actions.

<sup>2</sup> See Expertise on #29 – Mainstreaming: reconciling our food systems with nature: <https://cutt.ly/zE4mSW3>

<sup>3</sup> See Expertise on #24 – Aligning climate and biodiversity ambitions in 2021 and beyond: <https://cutt.ly/xE4mHAQ>

<sup>4</sup> See Expertise on #26 – Reforming Biodiversity-harmful subsidies: <https://cutt.ly/fE4mZIQ>

<sup>5</sup> See Dialogue with #25 – A responsibility and transparency mechanism for Biodiversity: <https://cutt.ly/4E4mBRo>  
See Expertise on #21 – A path to a coherent biodiversity information system: <https://cutt.ly/WE4QqkW>

<sup>6</sup> See Expertise on #3 – The post-2020 global biodiversity framework – what's in it for CITES?: <https://cutt.ly/GE4QIM3>

<sup>7</sup> <https://cutt.ly/eE4QSNP>





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### TRANSPARENCY

The relationship between biodiversity mainstreaming and the transparency framework was also a cornerstone of the workshop discussions. SMART targets, strongly rooted in science, helps setting a course of action, indispensable not only for public authorities, but also for the private sector. Companies are eager to know what is expected from them with guidelines and sound and credible targets against which to measure and report on their performances<sup>13</sup>. Political will and good governance are two of the main enabling conditions for biodiversity mainstreaming. The former is needed at all levels to grant biodiversity issues the attention they deserve. The latter is crucial to ensure that biodiversity concerns are shared across all sectors and by all stakeholders. Good governance also implies that arbitration processes are in place and allow for all stakeholders, inside and outside government, to be consulted.

### INTEGRATED NBSAPS

Beyond these enabling conditions for biodiversity mainstreaming, a few points gave rise to constructive exchanges. NBSAPs are often considered the main vehicle for the implementation of the Convention. Most of them have so far been elaborated by and for ministries in charge of biodiversity. The issue remains: are NBSAPs good vehicles for mainstreaming biodiversity in other sectors? Several answers were put forth by participants. Biodiversity must be mainstreamed in programming instruments specific to other sectors and in spatial planning instruments<sup>14</sup>. NBSAPs could also be seen as means to mainstream biodiversity within and for the Sustainable Development Goals. The importance to reach all levels of governance has been underlined. Closer to citizens than national governments, and with jurisdiction over land use planning, subnational authorities have a particularly important role to play<sup>15</sup>. States, regions, municipalities and communities are involved in day-to-day decisions that have potential strong impacts on landscapes and biodiversity. Their further involvement in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use could constitute an important contribution to the implementation of the GBF, as recognised by the Edinburgh process<sup>16</sup>.

## 3. THE 2030 AGENDA AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN MAINSTREAMING

The 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are presented as a universal, transformative project leading to systemic change. The SDGs have been designed as a mutually supportive package, whose indivisibility is the most visible innovation of the 2030 Agenda. Taking advantage of the integrative nature of Agenda 2030, how could scientifically demonstrated contributions

of ecosystems to sustainable development be a way to help mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors? Several options have been mentioned during the discussion.

SDGs 14 and 15 will be reviewed in 2022. Soon after the adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), this review could be an opportunity for participating countries to open a dialogue between intergovernmental organisations, such as FAO, UNIDO, WTO, UNCTAD, or UNEP, which can have a critical role in helping mainstream biodiversity in their own fields. The High Level Political Forum could also be a place where convergence among MEAs, such as climate and desertification conventions, but also Basel-Rotterdam-Stockholm conventions or others, could be monitored and discussed every 2 to 3 years, with a view to ensure synergies and avoid trade-offs. The CBD community could as well ask for biodiversity to be mainstreamed in the review of the SDGs that have the strongest links with it<sup>17</sup>. (e.g., SDGs 1, 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, or 17). These approaches could invite different communities to work together on particular biodiversity issues and design joint action plans with a monitoring and review mechanism and rendez-vous clauses. All these could greatly benefit from further regional preparation at the level of UN Regional Economic Commissions.

For the CBD community, working in the context of the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs represents an opportunity, much sought after by a number of countries, to rebalance the importance of the three objectives of the Convention, and give a renewed prominence to the second objective related to sustainable use of biodiversity. This could also help generate more political support and strength, as well as more financial resources.

## 4. RAISING MOMENTUM ON MAINSTREAMING TOWARDS COP15 AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS DECISIONS

### TOWARDS COP15

Despite thorough exchanges on the matter, no clear conclusion was reached on whether or not a specific target should be devoted to mainstreaming. All participants agreed on the critical importance to give to mainstreaming and to find ways to infuse it in the GBF. In this respect, it was deemed necessary to ensure coherence between the Long-term Approach to Mainstreaming and its Action Plan that will be discussed at the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI-3) and beyond, and the GBF. The role of NBSAPs as regards to mainstreaming has been discussed. Some participants considered

<sup>8</sup> Such as the chemical conventions, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) or the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

<sup>9</sup> See the IPBES-IPCC co-sponsored workshop report on biodiversity and climate change: <https://cutt.ly/NE4QGKq>

<sup>10</sup> See Expertise on #28 – Emerging Infectious Diseases – Biodiversity as a solution to a healthy planet for healthy people: <https://cutt.ly/VE4QK4e>

<sup>11</sup> See Expertise on #7 – Nature-based solutions: harnessing the potential for ambitious post-2020 biodiversity outcomes <https://cutt.ly/eE4Qldf>

<sup>12</sup> “The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) is a framework that integrates economic and environmental data to provide a more comprehensive and multipurpose view of the interrelationships between the economy and the environment and the stocks and changes in stocks of environmental assets, as they bring benefits to humanity.” See: <https://seea.un.org>

<sup>13</sup> See Mobilization of #15 – No business on a dead planet – why adopting an ambitious post-2020 GBF makes economic sense: <https://cutt.ly/EE4Wcfl>

<sup>14</sup> Expertise on #13 – Landscape approaches in a post-2020 global biodiversity framework – a tool to strengthen biodiversity: <https://cutt.ly/KE4WFDf>



Madagascar  
© Dominique Halleux

the usefulness to elaborate guidelines on the role that NBSAPs could play to facilitate mainstreaming of biodiversity into sectors and across society. In the same vein, it was suggested to review the terms of reference of national focal points to enhance their role in this respect. Questions were raised about the possibility to have dedicated mainstreaming targets in the post-2020 GBF but opinions were divided on this subject. Rather, the issue appears to be how to set up a reporting system in a way that can facilitate mainstreaming and allows both state and non-state actors to report. In line with the Bern II seminar, it has been recognised that the planning, reporting and review mechanism should involve other MEAs, FAO, other international organisations, and take into account their contributions.

Mainstreaming biodiversity within the Agenda 2030 may be an opportunity to give more prominence to the sustainable use of biodiversity as enshrined in the second objective of the Convention. Goal B and action targets 9 to 13 of the GBF First Draft pertain to this objective. Section C of the draft refers specifically to the links with Agenda 2030. This provides an opportunity to build stronger bridges between the 2030 Agenda and the implementation of the GBF. An address to the HLPF in the COP15 decision, and a convergent request from some governments to HLPF, could be helpful. One of the closest opportunities to start working with another community is the preparation of UNFCCC COP26. The United Kingdom Presidency has a specific work plan dedicated to the synergies between biodiversity and climate action. The decision of COP26 could include this topic, making sure to reflect both the contributions of biodiversity to climate action, but also the need for climate adaptation and mitigation solutions to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity. Biodiversity and climate NFPs should proactively engage each other to find how to make COP15 and COP26 resonate and converge in the most productive ways for biodiversity and climate.

**AFTER COP15**

Some participants expressed that, if the adoption of COP decisions is clearly a government's prerogative, their implementation, including the GBF's, should be a shared responsibility between all stakeholders. The idea of an implementation conference at national level, involving State and non-state actors was mentioned. Participants also suggested to entrust the implementation of the GBF to identified stakeholders, sector by sector. These suggestions raise the sensitive issue of the monitoring of implementation and of the

availability of appropriate metrics and indicators. A lot of work is still needed to complete and strengthen the monitoring framework, and this should be a priority area and outcome of COP15.

The question of whether or not goals and targets of the post-2020 GBF should be translated into national legislation has been discussed. Some of the participants see the translation of certain aspects of the GBF into legally binding rules at the national level, possibly through the NBSAPs, as necessary for the success of its implementation. Others observed that, for this translation to be enforceable, the private sector must be fully involved in the definition of the rules through industry sector associations. Others considered that voluntary processes offer additional possibilities but that good governance and transparency are universal conditions of success. The urgency to address biodiversity harmful subsidies as one of transformative change's main levers is unanimously recognized. The issue has been on the agenda for many years. In multiple sectors and at different levels, subsidies contribute to the alteration and loss of biodiversity<sup>15</sup>. Agriculture and fisheries<sup>19</sup> have rightly been pointed out as the two sectors where biodiversity harmful subsidies have the most detrimental impact. To some participants, a shift in subsidies - from supporting production capacities in developed countries to helping developing countries adapt their production to changing conditions of production would be welcome.

Mainstreaming biodiversity is both a continuous process and an outcome to achieve. While CBD COP15 will not possibly address all its dimensions, it remains an important step where key aspects must be addressed to finally turn biodiversity mainstreaming into a reality.

**[WE COMMIT TO MAINSTREAM NATURE INTO ALL SECTORS AND POLICIES. WE RECOGNISE THE URGENCY AND CALL FOR THE INTEGRATION OF BOTH CLIMATE AND NATURE-RELATED RISKS INTO ORGANISATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT ARCHITECTURE, AND OF INVESTING IN NATURAL CAPITAL, WHICH WILL ENABLE FINANCE TO PLAY A GREATER ROLE BY PIVOTING TOWARDS NATURE POSITIVE PROJECTS AND INVESTMENTS.]**

G7 Climate and Environment: Ministers' Communiqué, London, 21 May 2021

<sup>15</sup> See Mobilization of #6 – Local and subnational actors: the spearheads of biodiversity solutions in motion: <https://cutt.ly/aE4WVB6>

<sup>16</sup> See Dialogue with #18 – Edinburgh Process: empowering local and subnational governments for an inclusive and effective biodiversity framework: <https://cutt.ly/zE4WNGu>

<sup>17</sup> Especially with SDGs 1, 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 17

<sup>18</sup> See Expertise on #26 – Reforming Biodiversity-harmful subsidies: <https://cutt.ly/ME4Wliir>

<sup>19</sup> See Expertise on #16 – Marine Biodiversity: a key element of ecosystemic balance and long-term development: <https://cutt.ly/VE4W0ml>

**POST2020 BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK – EU SUPPORT IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AND IMPLEMENTED BY EXPERTISE FRANCE. IT AIMS AT FACILITATING A COMPREHENSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESS LEADING TO THE ADOPTION OF AN AMBITIOUS POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK THAT FOSTERS COMMITMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.**



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