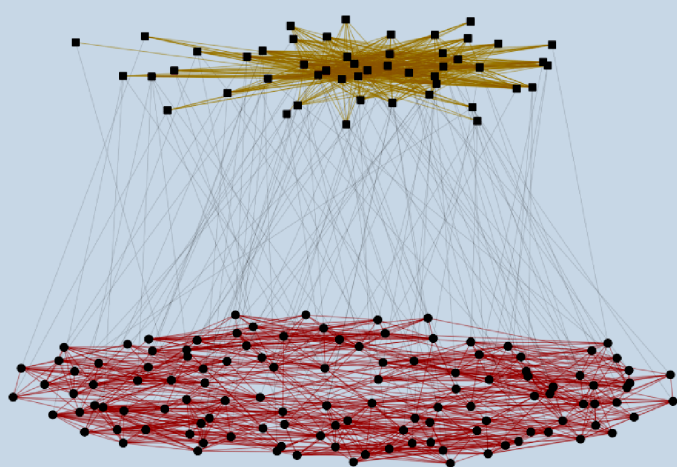




# TOWARDS POST-2020 EXPERTISE ON #35

## MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN PRACTICE AND AT ALL SCALES



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**Mainstreaming biodiversity into sectoral decisions is key for achieving transformative change, and necessary if we are to halt biodiversity loss and restore nature in line with the ambitions of the 2050 vision for biodiversity of Living in Harmony with Nature.**



**“THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING GLOBAL AMBITIONS FOR BIODIVERSITY WITHOUT ADDRESSING THE DRIVERS OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS – AND DOING SO REQUIRES THAT BIODIVERSITY IMPACTS AND DEPENDENCIES ARE FULLY INTEGRATED ACROSS ECONOMIC SECTORS”**

Neville Ash, Director of the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)

Delivering on biodiversity mainstreaming can be complex and involves an interplay between a range of issues and actors. The approach, methods and tools used for mainstreaming depend on the context and need to be adapted to fit any particular purpose. Unpacking some of the operational aspects of mainstreaming is key to understanding how a post 2020 global biodiversity framework (post-2020 GBF) might be implemented, and the potential role of the proposed Long-Term Approach to Mainstreaming (LTAM) and its Action Plan at global, regional, national, and local scales.

Mainstreaming biodiversity is the process of integrating biodiversity considerations in the policies, practices and economic activities that affect or depend on nature and its services<sup>1</sup>.

It is often a long-term and iterative process that builds on previous efforts, harnessing opportunities as they arise but also identifying and developing those opportunities proactively.

# 1. WHAT DOES SUCCESSFUL BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING LOOKS LIKE ?

Biodiversity mainstreaming is often an incremental process broken down into small, achievable, steppingstone impacts. Measuring success should therefore deploy short-term process indicators to monitor progress, as well as long-term impact indicators to assess achievement of multiple societal benefits. Indicators will usually be very specific to individual projects or contexts.

## CASE STUDY 1: THE NBSAPS 2.0 MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and UNEP-WCMC have worked with Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to incorporate development priorities in their NBSAPs. These priorities were then used to integrate biodiversity priorities in national development and sector plans. This improved in-country links between biodiversity, development, planning and finance, and better-reflected biodiversity priorities in national and district development, and urban and sector planning processes. Guidance documents, tools and statements using countries' experiences encouraged other countries to integrate biodiversity and development. An informal network of national and international mainstreaming champions was also created to develop and broaden leadership and capacity.

## CASE STUDY 2: MAPPING AND MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY PRIORITIES

Through various initiatives, UNEP-WCMC worked with the governments of Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda to develop spatial biodiversity assessments, efficiently identifying important areas for biodiversity and nature's contributions to people. This information helped in evaluating and identifying potential improvements to currently protected area networks, to identify priority areas for the mitigation of adverse impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, and to make strategic choices to prioritise conservation action. Uganda also produced three natural capital accounts for fisheries, tourism, and soils/land, which were used to make more informed, strategic, and sustainable decisions for the country's national development and biodiversity plans.

# 2. MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN PRACTICE

## ASSESS THE CURRENT LEVEL OF MAINSTREAMING AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL SCALES

Systematically identifying key opportunities and actions for mainstreaming first requires taking stock of existing mainstreaming at international, regional, national, and local levels. It should identify win-win situations and opportunities to optimise any trade-offs between achieving policy objectives, and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

## UNDERSTAND THE "POLITICAL ECONOMY"

**OF DECISION-MAKING** Biodiversity mainstreaming requires a thorough understanding of the "politics" of decision-making. The "political will" for mainstreaming is essential for the successful uptake of mainstreaming approaches and tools to address biodiversity and ecosystem services in policy implementation. Political will can be generated and strengthened through engaging champions such as heads of state and others, political leaders, national planning agencies, ministries of finance, statistical offices, and leading voices across fundamental sectors of the economy such as agriculture, energy, forestry, among others.

## CASE STUDY 3: UGANDA NATURAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTING

Three institutional champions in Uganda have shown how sustainable development requires good practice to be copied and repeated so that it becomes the norm in any institution or process. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics has established a section in the directorate of macro-economic statistics, coordinating the development and continuous updating of natural capital accounts. The National Planning Authority was instrumental in the development of Uganda's third National Development Plan, recognising the critical value of the Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) approach – and likewise in the Green Growth Development Strategy, NBSAP and the COVID-19 Green Economic Recovery plan. Uganda's National Environment Management Authority continues to raise awareness of the NCA approach, highlights the difference it makes to the quality of strategic decisions, and shows where skills are needed to ensure it remains embedded in key Ugandan institutions.

## CASE STUDY 4: THE GEF CONNECT PROJECT

National teams in Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda conducted detailed Political Economy Analyses to better understand the decision-making landscape that affects biodiversity and how biodiversity information could feed into how these decisions are made. This was used to select focal sectors and to develop mainstreaming strategies. Each country reviewed available national biodiversity data which fed into Biodiversity Information Products (BIPs) that addressed the decision-making demand. The BIPs were co-developed with the focal sector users to achieve ownership, capacity, and sustainability. In Ghana, for example, the BIPs were used to account for biodiversity in infrastructure development planning.

## VALUING AND ACCOUNTING FOR NATURE

The UN System of Environmental-Economic Accounting – Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA-EA)



Fishermen go to work, Lake Victoria © Slava2271

<sup>1</sup> See Huntley, B.J., Petersen, C. (2005) Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Production Landscapes, Working Paper 20. Global Environment Facility, Washington, D.C., and Huntley, B.J., Redford, K.H. (2014) Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Practice: a STAP Advisory Document. Global Environment Facility, Washington, D.C.



Farmer woman working in a salad plantation in a West African Rural Community  
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<sup>2</sup> Dasgupta, P. (2021), The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review. (London: HM Treasury) <https://cutt.ly/AYkL5wr>

recognises biodiversity as natural capital having economic and many other values to countries. Identifying and measuring the multiple values of nature consistently over time and space, for example, through natural capital accounting can help to understand and quantify the interlinkages between the economy and nature, providing a fuller picture of development progress alongside other metrics. Natural capital accounting can also support the integration of biodiversity into broader measures of national performance and reviews of policy options.

**USING ENTRY POINTS FOR BIODIVERSITY**

**MAINSTREAMING** Policies, planning, and decision-making processes governing different economic and social sectors are entry points for mainstreaming biodiversity at different levels of government (e.g., national, sectoral, and local). Entry points also exist in development cooperation programmes and at the project level. They can be found at different policy cycle stages: agenda setting, policy formulation and development, policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Opportunities for mainstreaming can be identified from predictable events (e.g., periodic changes in government or revision of NBSAPs, national development plans) and unpredictable events (e.g., Covid 19, political crises, or natural disasters).

**LEVELS OF BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING**

**a) Conceptual:** overall premises and objectives of key strategic national or sector policy and planning documents and processes explicitly take biodiversity into consideration. **b) Operational:** specific approaches, tools, instruments (examples in section three), and specific targets and actions needed to bring about real integration are identified and in place for biodiversity integration within key sectors. **c) Implementation:** refers to the final stage of the mainstreaming process where a range of approaches, tools and instruments are in concrete use to conserve and use biodiversity sustainably, including actual investment in biodiversity, monitoring and adaptive governance to achieve effective implementation.

### 3. APPROACHES, METHODS AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE AGENDA

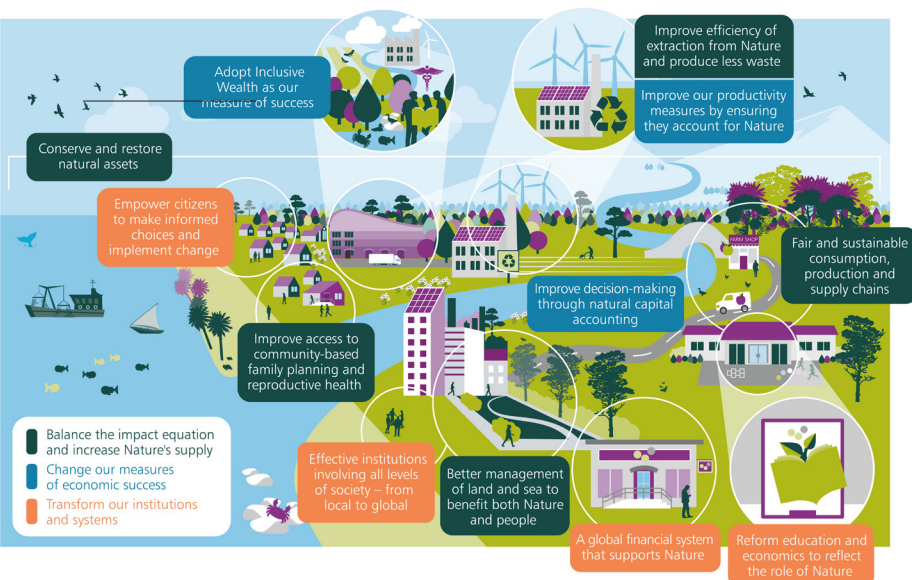
Mainstreaming biodiversity can be complex. The approach, methods and tools used for mainstreaming depend on the context and need to be adapted to fit the purpose. The draft post-2020 GBF, and the proposed LTAM and its Action Plan have identified a wide range of mainstreaming approaches, techniques, methods, and tools (presented in Box 1).

**BOX 1: TYPES OF MAINSTREAMING TOOLS**

- Information tools:** mapping and natural capital accounting; science-policy assessments supporting policy development; indicators to assess the implementation of national and sectoral policies; databases and frameworks for monitoring, general biodiversity awareness etc.,
- Decision-support tools:** strategic impact assessments; environmental impact assessments; project selection and evaluation criteria; planning, targeting, and reporting supported by indicators, monitoring, and mapping; impact assessments underpinning the development of policies and legislation (e.g., ex-ante assessments).
- Implementation tools:** fiscal instruments; market-based instruments and certification; legislative acts, regulations, and standards; spatially specific instruments (e.g., land-use zoning), public investment; market-based instruments and certification; transparent and secure land tenure etc.

The Dasgupta review <sup>2</sup> proposed three transformations that are key to a sustainable economy: (i) ensure that demands on nature do not exceed its supply, and that humanity increase nature’s supply relative to its current level; (ii) change current measures of economic success to help to guide a sustainable development model; and (iii) transform institutions and systems (e.g., finance and education systems) to enable and sustain these changes (Box 2).

**BOX 2: THREE TRANSFORMATIONS KEY TO EMBEDDING THE ECONOMY IN NATURE**



### 4. WHAT ARE THE MAIN OBSTACLES TO MAINSTREAMING?

- Biodiversity commitments are often seen as issues for environment departments. Their inclusion in economic planning, budgets and other policies is usually top-level rather than through specific targets and actions.





Train going through the jungle.  
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- Limited policy coherence across interlinked social, economic, and environmental agendas.
- Few multi-sector and multi-stakeholder partnerships are supporting mainstreaming.
- Focus on short-term economic and social benefits (often at the expense of biodiversity) and the electoral cycle, without incentives for a long-term view.
- Lack of cross-sectoral, multi-level and multi-stakeholder coordination, with implementation often led by isolated environment departments.
- Lack of capacity in developing and using some of the mainstreaming tools such as natural capital accounting.
- Reliance on biodiversity-specific public funds.
- Lack of measurable targets and indicators for mainstreaming, and integrated monitoring and evaluation systems to assist in learning and improving mainstreaming effectiveness.

- Establishing a process for reviewing the implementation of the LTAM aligned with the review of implementation of the post-2020 GBF, as a basis for learning lessons and improving the use of mainstreaming as a means for implementing the latter.
- Including specific targets and actions on mainstreaming, resource mobilisation and enabling legal and institutional frameworks, when updating and revising NBSAPs to align them to the post-2020 GBF.
- Making a strong case for supporting governments and other actors to develop and use natural capital accounts, for example under the SEEA-EA, including through regional and international cooperation.
- Increasing the use of spatial planning as an essential tool for effective mainstreaming on the ground, therefore contributing to the delivery of the post-2020 GBF.
- Promoting peer-to-peer learning among CBD parties and other actors. Establishing a community of practice for mainstreaming biodiversity.
- Embracing the proposed GEF, UNDP and UNEP fast-track support to governments to prepare for the rapid implementation of the post-2020 GBF, including reviewing and identifying opportunities for greater policy coherence and biodiversity mainstreaming across different sectors <sup>5</sup>.
- Supporting biodiversity mainstreaming at all levels, aligned with the promotion of policy and institutional coherence for sustainable development.

## 5. HOW INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS COULD SUPPORT MULTIPLE-LEVEL MAINSTREAMING?

<sup>3</sup> LTAM, CBD/SBI/3/13

<sup>4</sup> See CBD/SBI/3/CRP.8: Engagement with Subnational Governments, Cities, and other Local Authorities to Enhance Implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. <https://cutt.ly/TYkLZLj>

<sup>5</sup> See CBD article on Fast-tracking action in support of post-2020 global biodiversity framework. <https://cutt.ly/6YkLVZc>

Cover photo  
Visualizing Multilevel Networks with graph layouts  
@R-bloggers

Biodiversity mainstreaming will be fundamental to the delivery of the post-2020 GBF, and is explicit in various of the draft goals and targets. It is also covered in the proposed delivery mechanisms for the post-2020 GBF, including the draft LTAM and its Action Plan <sup>3</sup>, and the proposed plan of action on subnational governments, cities, and other local authorities for biodiversity (2021-2030) <sup>4</sup>. Commitment at the international level concerning the post-2020 GBF, LTAM and its Action Plan could help promote mainstreaming at the national level and in various sectors. Practical opportunities for enabling mainstreaming in the implementation of the post-2020 GBF at global, regional, national, and local scales include the following:

- Considering the post-2020 GBF as the primary tool to support mainstreaming actions.
- Aligning the LTAM and its Action Plan with the post-2020 GBF targets and recognising them as a tool to facilitate and support the implementation of the post-2020 GBF.

Game-changing approaches, methods and tools for biodiversity mainstreaming already exist but have not been implemented at a sufficient scale. Doing so requires political will and collective efforts from national and local governments, businesses, the finance sector, civil society organisations and citizens. The use of existing mechanisms and mainstreaming approaches and tools can be replicated. CBD parties and other actors could leverage the development and adoption of a post-2020 GBF and subsequent processes to take the post-2020 GBF into account, and engage with a broader cross-sector range of actors to implement mainstreaming at the national and local levels. Important conditions for achieving mainstreaming commitments in the draft post-2020 GBF as well as the draft LTAM and its Action Plan will be political commitment and will, coordination mechanisms (e.g., whole-of-government and whole-of-society coordination), and integrated monitoring and reporting mechanism for national and local levels implementation of the post-2020 GBF and other national development and sector plans and policies.

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