

## Biodiversity Mainstreaming

At the UN Biodiversity Conference in Egypt in 2018, Parties “stressed that mainstreaming biodiversity is essential for halting the loss of biodiversity and for the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the goals and objectives of different multilateral agreements and international processes, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement”.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this document is to present a brief overview of the concept of biodiversity mainstreaming in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity, including key decisions, the entry points, and tools and approaches for biodiversity mainstreaming. The document also provides a non-exhaustive list of resources available on this topic. The present document has been developed as a background document for participants at the ninth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity, and it is for information only.

### What is biodiversity mainstreaming?

Biodiversity mainstreaming is a term which is not explicitly mentioned in the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). However, it gained traction in the last few years in relation to Article 6(b) that calls for Parties “to integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sector or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies”. It aims to both reduce the negative impacts of human activities on biodiversity and acknowledge the potential for biodiversity to help achieve development outcomes.

There are however multiple definitions of biodiversity mainstreaming, and the concept has been defined by other organisations as well, with different focuses. For example, the [Global Environment Facility \(GEF\)](#) refers to biodiversity mainstreaming as involving “the integration of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use principles into policies, plans, programs, and production systems where the primary focus has previously been on production, economic activity, and development, rather than on biodiversity conservation losses or gains”<sup>2</sup>, emphasizing the inclusion of biodiversity concerns in activities that were not traditionally accounting for them. Similarly, the [UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative \(PEI\)](#) asserted that mainstreaming is achieved by taking environmental issues “into the heart of economic decision-making, particularly national and subnational planning and budgeting processes”<sup>3</sup>. Biodiversity mainstreaming highlights the biodiversity concerns – potentials, needs and risks – associated with socio-economic development and human well-being but it is not just a one-way push to get biodiversity into development policies, plans and activities. “Reciprocal” biodiversity mainstreaming refers to the incorporation of development priorities in biodiversity strategies and activities, acknowledging their interdependence, common challenges and successes.<sup>4</sup>

The biodiversity mainstreaming efforts in the context of the Convention are framed by Article 6(b) of its Convention, and by sector-specific decisions adopted by the Conference of Parties (further details

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<sup>1</sup> CBD COP Decision 14/3

<sup>2</sup> Petersen, C. and B. Huntley (2005), Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Production Landscapes, Working Paper 20, Global Environment Facility. Available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/books/2009/B-03145.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Mainstreaming Environment and Climate for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development – A Handbook to Strengthen Planning and Budgeting Processes  
<https://unpei.org/sites/default/files/publications/PEI%20handbook-low%20res.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> IIED and UNEP-WCMC (2017) Mainstreaming biodiversity and development. Guidance from African experience 2012-17, <https://www.unep-wcmc.org/system/comfy/cms/files/files/000/001/067/original/17608IIED.pdf>

below). At a national scale, country-specific efforts will most often be framed by their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), and any other development or sectoral plans and programmes. In parallel, at both global and regional scales, the private sector has also been driving the biodiversity mainstreaming agenda by embedding biodiversity considerations into corporate strategies. Due to the nature of the process, biodiversity mainstreaming involves working with a wide range of stakeholders: governmental institutions, private sector, civil society, non-governmental organisations, media and academia.

## What are the important processes and decisions on biodiversity mainstreaming in the context of the Convention?

At the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP13) held in Mexico in 2016, [decision XIII/3](#) was adopted to enhance the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and the achievement of its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The decision called for Parties and other stakeholders to mainstream biodiversity into four sectors with direct dependencies (agriculture, forests, fisheries and tourism), recognising the fundamental changes needed in consumption and production patterns to ensure sustainable development. The [Cancun Declaration](#), signed by over 190 countries, was an unprecedented acknowledgement that biodiversity management must involve multiple governmental and economic sectors, beyond environment ministries. Documents [UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/5](#) and [UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/15](#) [UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/5/Add.1](#) provide additional information on the context and drivers behind the decision adopted at COP13.

At the 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP14) held in Egypt in 2018, additional decisions were adopted regarding biodiversity mainstreaming in the energy and mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and processing sectors ([Decision 14/3](#)); as well as in the health sector ([Decision 14/4](#)). The decisions encourage Parties to apply biodiversity mainstreaming in decision-making processes of public and private financial institutions related to the approval of projects and investments in the aforementioned sectors. Voluntary guidelines for the design and effective implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction have also been set out under [Decision on 14/5](#), mainstreaming biodiversity into relevant national and regional development policies, processes and budgets. This decision emphasized the synergy between biodiversity and other environmental issues, and the need to develop a common approach. An [Informal Advisory Group \(IAG\)](#) on “Mainstreaming of Biodiversity” has been established to advise the Executive Secretary on the development of a proposal for a long-term approach to mainstreaming biodiversity, including on ways to integrate it adequately into the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. As a significant number of interested stakeholders could not be accommodated into the IAG, an Extended Consultative Network (ECN) has subsequently been created to contribute with their expertise and provide feedback at important milestones of the IAG’s work.

## What are the entry points for biodiversity mainstreaming?

Biodiversity mainstreaming requires influencing decision-making processes at all tiers of government and at opportune moments. Suitable windows of opportunity must be identified to ensure uptake by policy makers, relevant stakeholders, and the broader public.

Entry points can be identified and prioritised based on the links between biodiversity and human well-being, on the availability of a “champion” to drive the mainstreaming effort, and on the timing to create an opportunity.

Promising opportunities can emerge during the following:

- Periodic update and revision of policies, such as national law or sectoral guidelines;

- Preparation of sectoral, sub-national and national budgets;
- Zoning of an area of importance of biodiversity;
- Change of government;
- After a crisis, natural hazard or conflict requiring rebuilding and recovery efforts; and
- Review of country's development for donor funds.<sup>5</sup>

Different entry points can be identified throughout the government tiers:

- National strategies, plans, and programmes which touch on several sectors and activities and have society-wide impact, but which may also be most difficult to achieve.
- Sub-national level strategies, plans, and programmes, which are more likely to have direct impacts on ecosystems due to their proximity with action on the ground.
- Regional strategies, plans, and programmes, which touch on sectoral activities that depend on or impact on biodiversity, and transcend state boundaries (e.g. fisheries, tourism).
- Sectoral strategies, plans, and programmes, which address the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the development of nationally important sectors.
- Area-based management initiatives, which touch on the management of specific spatial areas, potentially spanning over several jurisdictions (e.g. integrated watershed management, integrated marine and coastal area management).<sup>6</sup>

The National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are a key instrument to integrate biodiversity considerations into national development and poverty reduction strategies; and vice versa, to embed development priorities into national biodiversity strategies. Their periodic revision offers valuable opportunities to implement biodiversity mainstreaming at all government tiers.

## What are the means (tools and approaches) for biodiversity mainstreaming?

Biodiversity mainstreaming can be carried out through a wide range of mechanisms, such as:

- Making a business-case, using tools such as valuation, public environmental expenditure reviews, and poverty and social impact assessments;
- Reforming governmental and business policies, using tools such as awareness raising, spatial and land use planning, and use of fiscal and economic incentives;
- Building staff and institutional capacity, in particular in non-environmental ministries;
- Adapting incentives for people's jobs and businesses.

The table below summarizes some of the types of policy instruments used for biodiversity mainstreaming.

**Table 1. Biodiversity mainstreaming tools and approaches and their application**

Policy instrument	Examples of tools and approaches
Legislation	Harmonized land use planning; nature protection and conservation; forests; prohibitions and restrictions on use; quality, quantity and design standards
Planning policies	Integrated land, water and living resources management (such as the ecosystem approach); land tenure and zoning; biodiversity offsets, cost-benefit analysis and scenario analysis; integrating

<sup>5</sup> CBD Secretariat's NBSAP training modules version 2.1 (2011) – [Module 3: Mainstreaming biodiversity into national sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies, policies, plans and programs](#)

<sup>6</sup> CBD Secretariat's NBSAP training modules version 2.1 (2011) – [Module 3: Mainstreaming biodiversity into national sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies, policies, plans and programs](#)

	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements into planning policy
Environmental fiscal reforms and policies	Reform of harmful subsidies, taxes, fees and charges such as land taxes or fossil fuel subsidies, payment for ecosystem services
Voluntary agreements	Between businesses, civil society and government for nature protection and conservation and benefits for local communities, e.g. Equator Principles
Education and information policies	Eco-labelling and certification; education campaigns; education curricula
Green public procurement	Using certified products to guide procurement, e.g. of sustainably harvested timber or fish and fairly traded agricultural products

Source: Extracted from IIED and UNEP-WCMC (2017) *Mainstreaming biodiversity and development: guidance from African experience 2012-17*. <https://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/17608IIED.pdf>

Examples and lessons learned of biodiversity mainstreaming can be found in IIED and UNEP-WCMC (2015) “Stories of change: mainstreaming biodiversity and development”<sup>7</sup>.

## Some additional resources

Below is a non-exhaustive list of resources which provide additional information on biodiversity mainstreaming.

CBD Secretariat’s NBSAP training modules version 2.1 (2011)– [Module 3: Mainstreaming biodiversity into national sectoral and cross-sectorial strategies, policies, plans and programs](#)

- ⇒ This module is part of a training package on the updating and revising of NBSAPs in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. It is targeted at CBD’s national focal points and planners of other biodiversity-related conventions.

FAO Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition – [Report of Activity 149 \(2018\): Mainstreaming biodiversity in agriculture, fisheries and forestry for improved food security and better nutrition](#)

- ⇒ This report summarises the online consultation carried out in the context of the FAO’s global forum, gathering experiences and examples from practitioners from 29 countries.

GEF (2016) [Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Practice: A Review of GEF Experience](#).

- ⇒ The review synthesizes two previous analyses by GEF, one on mainstreaming biodiversity for conservation and a second on mainstreaming biodiversity in production landscapes. It complements them with a systematic review of the final evaluations of completed mainstreaming projects.

IIED and UNEP-WCMC (2017) [Mainstreaming biodiversity and development. Guidance from African experience 2012-17](#).

- ⇒ This guidance provides information and tools for mainstreaming biodiversity into development priorities. A range of guidance documents were published under the “Mainstreaming Biodiversity and Development” project, available [here](#).

IUCN and BirdLife International (2017) [Mainstreaming Biodiversity](#).

- ⇒ These factsheets document success-stories of biodiversity mainstreaming through different policy tools and in a range of sectors.

<sup>7</sup> <https://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/17305IIED.pdf>

OECD (2018) [Mainstreaming Biodiversity for Sustainable Development](#).

- ⇒ Based on experiences from 16 countries, this report examines biodiversity mainstreaming in four areas: 1) at the national level, 2) in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, 3) in development co-operation, and 4) in the monitoring and evaluation of the mainstreaming process.

Smith T., et al. (2018) [Mainstreaming international biodiversity goals for the private sector: Main Report & Case Studies](#). (Joint Nature Conservation Committee, JNCC, Report No. 613)

- ⇒ The report outlines 14 case studies to demonstrate the translatability of business actions on biodiversity across multiple contexts. It illustrates the relevance of international biodiversity goals to the private sector.

Summit for Sustainability in Africa (2012) [The Gaborone Declaration](#).

- ⇒ The declaration initiated a regional policy framework for 14 African countries to take regional actions in: 1) incorporating the value of natural capital in public and private policies and decision-making; 2) pursuing sustainable production in agriculture, fisheries, and extractive industries while maintaining natural capital; and 3) generating data and building capacity to support policy networks.

UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (2009) [Guidance Note on Mainstreaming Environment into National Development Planning](#).

- ⇒ The guidance provides knowledge-sharing on launching and sustaining a country-level environmental mainstreaming programme, highlighting general success factors and challenges.

UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (2017) [Mainstreaming Environment and Climate for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development: The Interactive Handbook to Strengthen Planning and Budgeting Processes](#).

- ⇒ The handbook draws on successful experiences from countries around the world in effectively mainstreaming poverty-environment issues into development agendas. It also reflects on lessons learned and updates on the Poverty-Environment Initiative's approach.