

Synergies Between Biodiversity- and Climate-Relevant Policy Frameworks and Their Implementation



A SERIES OF
THEMATIC PAPERS





Acknowledgements

Updated in September 2024

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The project team gratefully acknowledges the comments and input provided by resource persons and peer reviewers, in particular Thora Amend (Conservation & Development), Harro van Asselt (University of Cambridge), Andrea Bender (GIZ), Alexandre Chausson

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All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the authors of each thematic paper.





Synergies Between Biodiversity- and Climate-Relevant Policy Frameworks and Their Implementation

There is growing recognition that the global climate and biodiversity crises are interlinked. Climate change has impacts on ecosystems and, together with land-use change, is among the main drivers of biodiversity loss. Without resolving the climate crisis, restoring biodiversity will not be possible. Furthermore, actions and policies that aim to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects can have negative impacts on biodiversity. In turn, biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use can help mitigate climate change by enhancing ecosystems' capacity for carbon capture and storage and help adapt to it through increasing ecosystem resilience.

The high degree of interdependence within living systems causes complex interplays at both the ecosystem and policy-making levels. This means that policy action (or lack thereof) to address climate change has impacts on biodiversity and vice versa. These linkages are showcased in recent major global assessments by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Policy efforts addressing both challenges in an integrated manner, however, still remain limited, although decision-makers and negotiators at relevant forums, including the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Conven-

tion on Biological Diversity (CBD), are aware of the necessity of integrated approaches. The CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) has been quite active in integrating climate change-related considerations in the CBD work, advancing technical work to enhance understanding of the linkages, addressing synergies as part of its agenda, and promoting coordination between secretariats. In the UNFCCC process, until recently, parties had shown less willingness to integrate biodiversity considerations in their deliberations, with limited exceptions related to forests and land-use management regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives. Recent COP meetings, however, have witnessed a wave of increased recognition of nature's role within the climate regime, which can be seen as a promising step toward bridging the climate and biodiversity agendas.

There is a need to amplify the synergies between the two processes and make use of existing opportunities to translate such synergies into global policies and domestic implementation measures. This approach can lead to identifying options that achieve multiple benefits for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Recent policy developments under both processes can enable such amplification of synergies. Under the CBD, the



Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted in 2022 to guide global biodiversity action to 2030 and beyond. The GBF features climate-related objectives in Target 8 on minimizing the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and building resilience and Target 11 on nature's contributions to people. Several other targets contribute directly to climate change mitigation and adaptation goals or are indirectly relevant to climate action. In the UNFCCC context, recognition of the interlinked crises of climate change and biodiversity loss in the 2021 Glasgow Climate Pact was followed by recognition of the role of nature-based solutions (NbS) in the 2022 Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, integration of a thematic target on ecosystems and biodiversity in the 2023 UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience under the Global Goal on Adaptation of the Paris Agreement, and recognition of the importance of conserving and restoring nature and ecosystems, in line with the GBF, in the 2023 decision of the first global stocktake. A crucial step in building momen-

tum for synergistic action has been the voluntary but landmark COP 28 joint statement on Climate, Nature and People, led by COP Presidencies of all Rio Conventions and endorsed by 18 countries from across the globe. These developments provide a good basis for synergistic action on the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss through national plans and strategies.

In this context, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), via the IKI-funded "Support Project for the Design and Implementation of the New Global Biodiversity Framework (BioFrame)," its successor "Support Project for Implementation Instruments of the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement (BioClima)" and the IKI-funded "Support Project for the implementation of the Paris Agreement (SPA)," the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), and Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) have developed a series of thematic papers illustrating synergies between





biodiversity and climate change conventions and policies and their implementation at the national and local levels. To provide a comprehensive picture of relevant challenges while acknowledging that several issues remain open in the framework of ongoing intergovernmental negotiations, the papers cover the following six topics:

- 1** Linkages and synergies between international instruments on biodiversity and climate change
- 2** The role of science–policy–practice interfaces for ensuring coherent policies and actions
- 3** Nature-based solutions: an approach for joint implementation of climate and biodiversity commitments
- 4** Good governance for integrated climate and biodiversity policy-making
- 5** From national to local implementation: a collaborative, multi-level effort to achieve joint climate and biodiversity goals
- 6** Delivering financing for joint biodiversity and climate solutions

The papers were authored by a team of researchers and practitioners with considerable experience in the field and revised/updated in 2024. The research methodology involved a review of academic and grey literature, as well as United Nations documentation, and interviews with selected resource persons. The papers have been through an extensive peer-review process. They aim to provide an overview, a sound scientific basis, and inspirational examples and case studies of synergies between biodiversity and climate change commitments. The overall objective is to enhance the understanding and policy uptake of such synergies, including through NbS, their enabling conditions, and the support mechanisms required for joint implementation and mainstreaming of biodiversity and climate change policies. The intended audience is biodiversity and climate change negotiators, policy- and decision-makers, and practitioners.





Key Messages

Overall, the thematic papers highlight ample scientific evidence and existing policy opportunities to pursue a synergistic response to the interlinked challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. Coordinated policy responses to ensure such synergies, however, are still scarce. Some of the key messages include the following:

- Legal tools and policy mechanisms that can support synergies between the CBD and the UNFCCC, as well as the coordinated implementation of the biodiversity and climate commitments, currently exist but are not used to their full effect. The Joint Liaison Group between the Rio Conventions represents a notable example. While the CBD COP has been quite active in addressing climate-related considerations, UNFCCC parties should focus more on integrating biodiversity considerations into their deliberations. Recent developments, including adoption of the GBF under the CBD and increased recognition of the role of nature in addressing climate change under the UNFCCC, provide the necessary policy space to strengthen such synergies in the overall context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The urgency for action for addressing climate change and biodiversity loss requires coherent policy approaches that support transformative instead of incremental changes. These synergies need to be addressed more strategically, in particular in the update and implementation of nationally determined contributions, national adaptation plans, long-term strategies, and national biodiversity strategies and action plans.
- Science can provide knowledge, tools, and methods for assessing the interlinkages between climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development and contribute to participatory decision-making processes for navigating synergies, trade-offs, and uncertainties. Science-policy processes bringing together actors with different knowledge on climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development can support the co-creation and implementation of more coherent policies and actions at the local to global scales. Science-policy-practice interfaces can ensure strategies are adapted to the local context and stakeholder needs, as well as reduce trade-offs with other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



→ NbS can be seen as an overarching concept embracing the CBD's Ecosystem Approach and other ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, as well as ecosystem restoration and disaster risk reduction. While it builds on the Ecosystem Approach, NbS is more aspirational for social and economic outcomes and underscores the role of ecosystem management for sustainable development. The concept can be used to support communication and mainstreaming of biodiversity values beyond the conservation community. Greater clarity and precision are required to ensure the effective deployment of NbS. Core standards have been developed to guide the concept's relationship with other approaches and its implementation on the ground, as well as to address concerns regarding the lack of outcome delivery for biodiversity over climate.

→ Reorganizing governance processes is at the heart of the transformative action required to solve the climate and biodiversity crises. Challenges remain in the meaningful representation of Indigenous Peoples' views in climate policy and action and in recognizing their rights over resources in land and seascapes. National governments play an important role in the full inclusion of local stakeholders through just multi-level governance. As long as capacities and systems are in place to promote the sound management of resources at local levels, local and non-state actors can contribute to change at higher levels.

→ Approaches to ensure good governance for integrated decision making also include a range of rights-based approaches, inter-institutional and multistakeholder cooperation mechanisms, means to enhance accountability, and tools for mainstreaming biodiversity and climate considerations into development planning and sectoral policies.





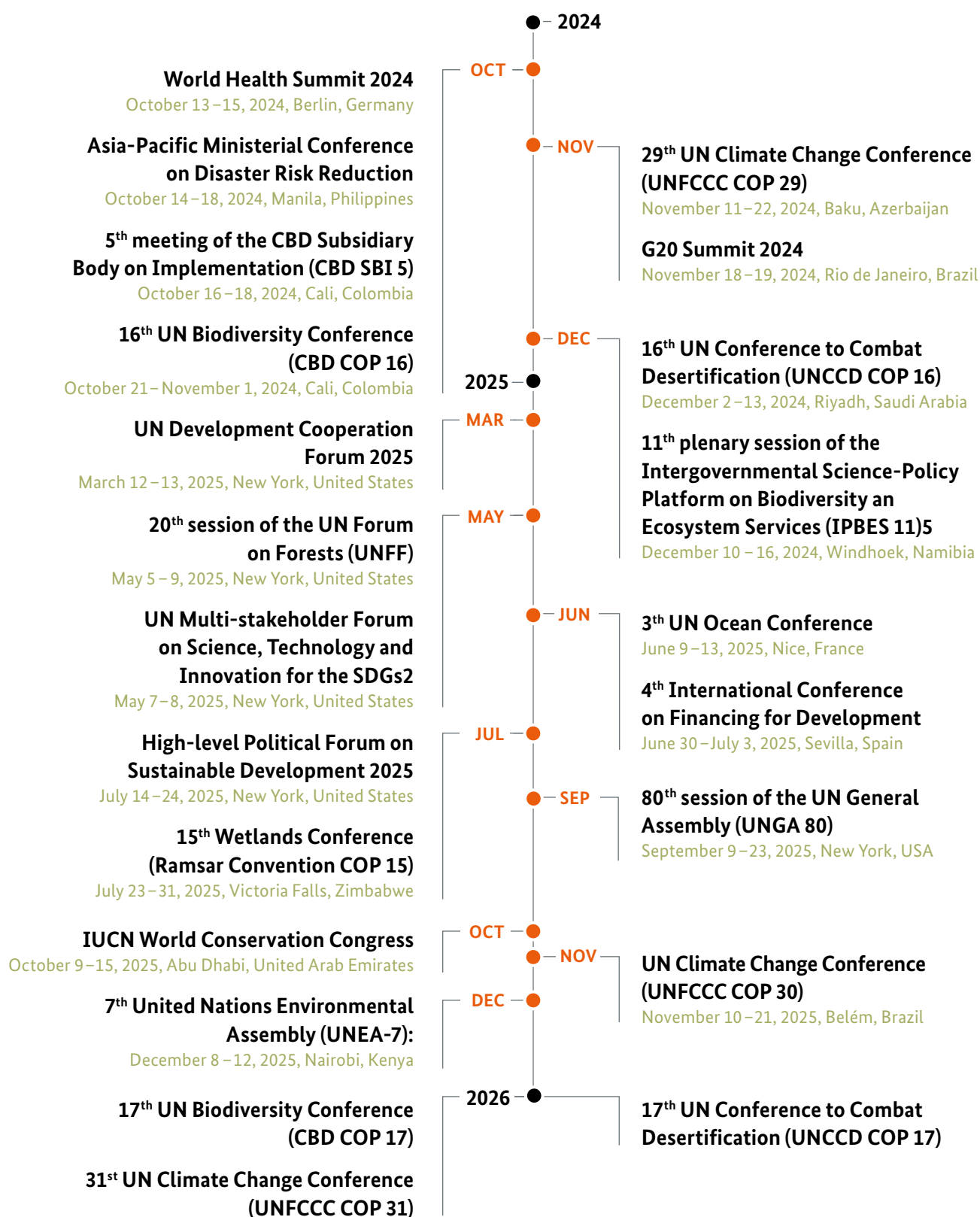
- Boosting cooperation and strengthening financing for synergistic international approaches will be decisive for more integrated climate–biodiversity national and local governance. Collaboration across the UNFCCC and CBD financial mechanisms and joint mobilization of resources can play a key role. At the national level, countries must identify synergies among national climate and biodiversity goals and integrate them into budgetary processes to ensure the consistency of goals, better harmonization of donor funding, and greater involvement of the private sector. This can facilitate strategic investments, enable smart use of resources, and deliver joint benefits. Determination of the right financial measures and incentives needs to be embedded in regulatory frameworks that advance greater domestic coordination in implementation and budget planning to maximize synergies and minimize trade-offs.
- Policies need to allow for and enhance change at the system level, especially to ensure sustainable global production and consumption. Addressing the root causes of the alarming current state of climate and biodiversity is paramount for achieving the SDGs—a challenging but worthwhile task for the next decade.
- The transformation required also depends on a radical redesign of the financial system, on scrutinizing the impacts of trade and investment agreements, and on addressing vested interests, corruption, and power asymmetries. Building the necessary political will remains the single most important prerequisite for the transformative actions required to address global challenges in a synergistic way.





Policy Opportunities to Promote Synergistic Decision Making

A timeline of events presenting opportunities to promote the need for synergistic decision making to address the biodiversity and climate crises:





Imprint

As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

Published by:

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices
Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

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Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 36
53113 Bonn, Germany
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This publication is part of a thematic paper series on synergies between biodiversity- and climate-relevant policy frameworks and their implementation developed by GIZ, IISD and UFZ, funded under the International Climate Initiative (IKI).

The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) supports this initiative on the basis of a decision adopted by the German Bundestag.

Supported by:



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection



based on a decision of
the German Bundestag

Series of Papers Edited by:

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Johannes Förster (UFZ), Mathias Bertram (GIZ),
Daniel Plugge (GIZ)

Suggested Citation:

Tertton, A., Tsioumani, E., Förster, J. & Morchain, D. (2024). Synergies between biodiversity- and climate-relevant policy frameworks and their implementation. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ).

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Design and editing:

now [nau], kommunikative & visuelle gestaltung,
Frankfurt/Main

Photo credits:

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September 2024

On behalf of:



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety

of the Federal Republic of Germany