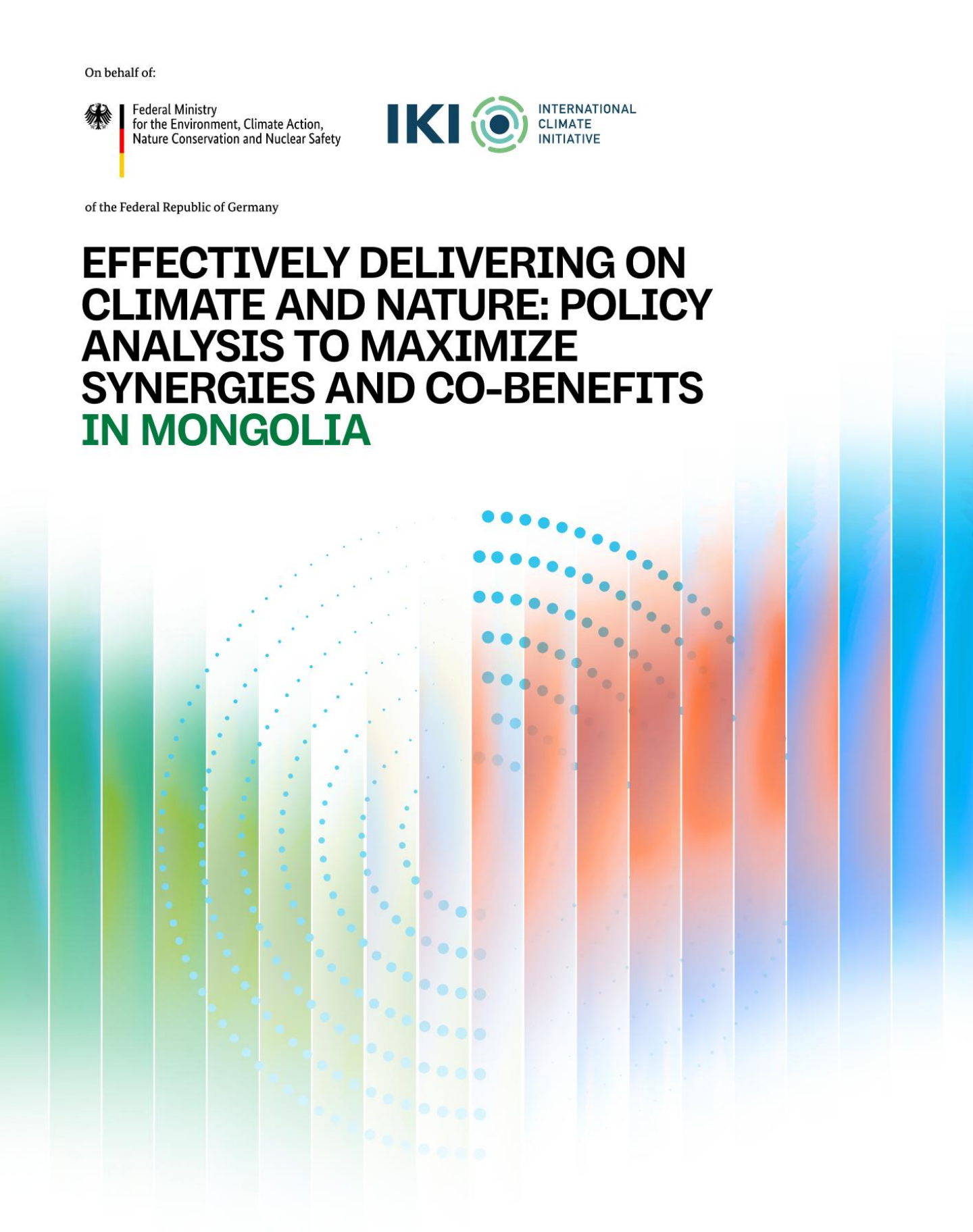
On behalf of:

Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Climate Action,
Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

of the Federal Republic of Germany

IKI INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE INITIATIVE

EFFECTIVELY DELIVERING ON CLIMATE AND NATURE: POLICY ANALYSIS TO MAXIMIZE SYNERGIES AND CO-BENEFITS IN MONGOLIA



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1. Introduction

The climate and biodiversity crises are deeply interconnected, each amplifying the impacts of the other (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2018; Security Council Report, 2021). Climate change has become a key factor driving biodiversity loss by accelerating habitat destruction and species extinction. At the same time, ecosystem degradation hampers efforts to combat and adapt to climate change, as it releases stored carbon and weakens ecosystems' ability to bounce back. There is the risk that feedback loops between climate change and biodiversity loss increase the likelihood of crossing tipping points in the Earth's system (Pörtner et al., 2021). Although scientists widely recognize these interconnections, national strategies and policies often treat them separately, leading to fragmented approaches and silos that fail to address the full scope of the problem.

As a result, there is growing momentum for more synergies and integrated approaches to the governance and implementation of national climate and biodiversity strategies, in particular a country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Although isolated instances of collaboration are beginning to surface, they may not be enough to fully address the complexity of these intertwined challenges. To move forward effectively, climate and nature policies must be strategically aligned and implemented in synergy to navigate overlapping issues and to develop coordinated, future-facing solutions.

This policy analysis defines synergies as the intentional coordination of planning and implementation of national climate and biodiversity commitments and strategies – NDCs, NAPs and NBSAP – at the national level to achieve enhanced results greater than if each policy instrument were implemented by itself. Creating synergies "creates multiple co-benefits, seeks more effective outcomes, and ensures efforts in one area do not undermine progress in another" (Qi et al., 2024). Synergies emerge from the dynamic interplay among diverse elements—such as actors, resources, coordination mechanisms, and processes—and are facilitated by enabling conditions like a high-level mandate and a shared understanding of interconnections.

To foster stronger integration and synergy between national climate and biodiversity policies, it is essential to understand how Mongolia's NDC, NAP, and NBSAP align, where challenges lie, and what opportunities exist for coordinated planning and implementation. The following policy analysis seeks to explore existing opportunities between climate and biodiversity policy domains for enhancing synergistic outcomes in the future and potential challenges that may hinder this process in Mongolia. This assessment is based on the "Effectively delivering on Climate and Nature: NDCs, NAPs and NBSAPs Synergies" checklist (Qi et al., 2024), developed by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). It identifies overlaps, gaps, and pathways to enhance synergies across the three frameworks by examining governance structures, high-level mandates, strategic goals and targets, policy actions, financing mechanisms, and systems for monitoring and reporting. The policy document analysis was supplemented by semi-structured expert interviews, undertaken with mid-level to senior civil servants from the national government, as well as international development cooperation agencies supporting different processes across the policy domains.

The report begins by outlining the institutional landscape for climate and biodiversity, along with the current status of key national policies. This is followed by a synergies assessment, which examines how Mongolia's NDC, NAP, and NBSAP intersect, highlighting shared objectives, targets, indicators, activities, stakeholders, sectors, potential trade-offs, and gaps. It then explores the potential challenges, gaps, and barriers that could hinder deeper integration and the development of effective synergies. The final section highlights actionable opportunities and strategic entry points to enhance alignment and strengthen coordination across Mongolia's climate and biodiversity frameworks.

The analysis aims to inform national focal points; NDC, NAP, and NBSAP policy-makers and planners; and civil society organizations in Mongolia working to align their climate and biodiversity policies and actions to seek more effective outcomes and multiple and co-benefits.

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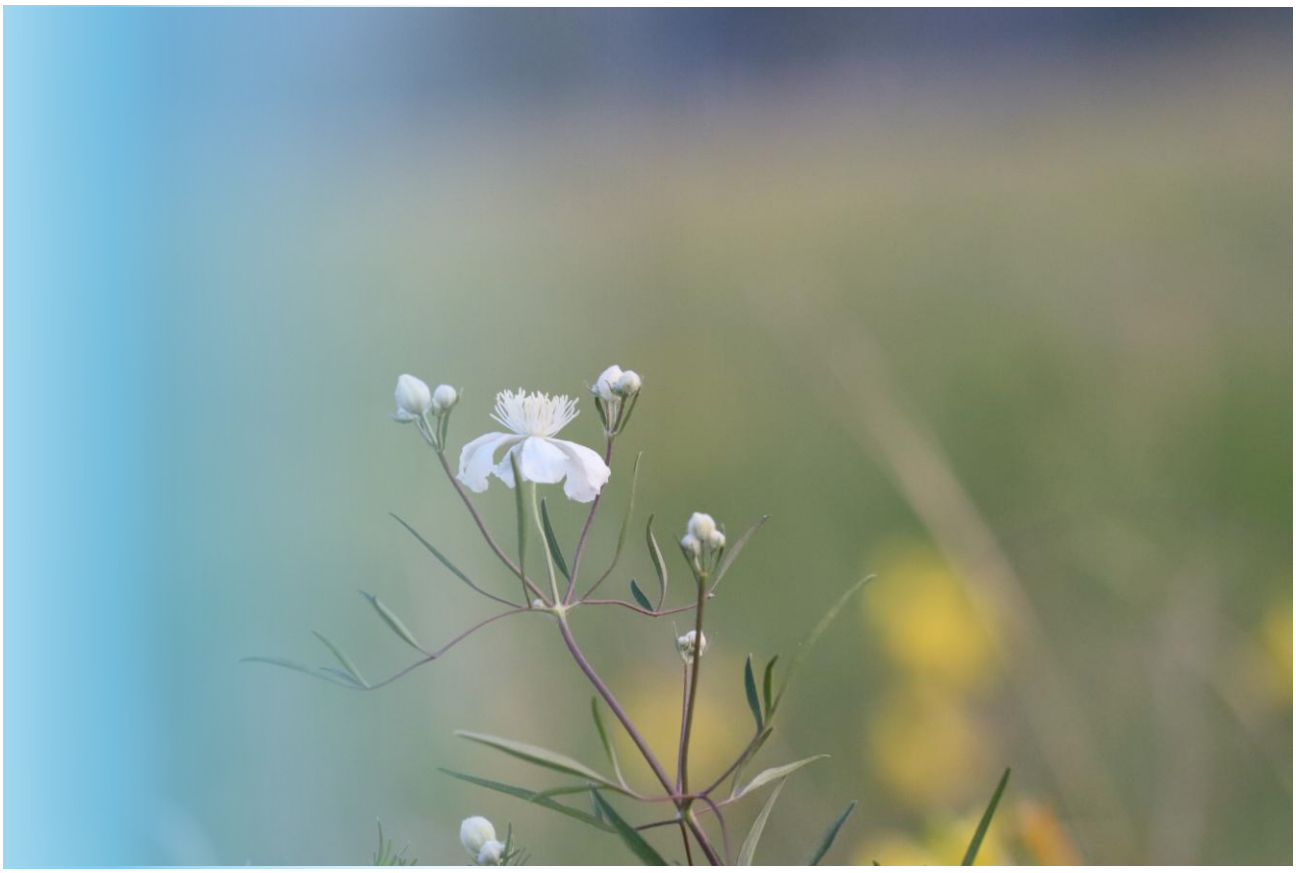


2. Climate and Biodiversity Contexts and Institutional Arrangements

Located in Northeast Asia, Mongolia is a developing country highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and biodiversity degradation. It is one of the largest landlocked countries in the world, with an economy that is primarily based on mining, quarrying, manufacturing, and agriculture, which is highly dependent on pasture-based livestock and rainfed crop production. Since the 1990s, Mongolia has been striving to transition from a one-party governance model with a centrally planned economy, to a parliamentary democracy with a market economy. As a nation with a nomadic tradition, Mongolia has undergone rapid urbanization and industrialization, with 70.8% of its population living in an urban area (Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia [MET], 2024). Mongolia is also home to diverse ecosystems and species, with 32.5 million ha (roughly 20.8% of the total territory) being designated as protected areas.

This section summarizes the climate change and biodiversity contexts of Mongolia, as well as its institutional and governance arrangements relevant to climate change and biodiversity policy planning and implementation. This section is primarily developed based on Mongolia's Fourth National Communication (MET, 2024) and its NAP (Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Mongolia [MECC], 2025) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), unless otherwise referenced.

2.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity Contexts

Mongolia has diverse ecoregions with climate conditions ranging from continental to boreal. Its territory spans across the northern taiga (boreal forest), through the central steppes and grasslands, to the semi-deserts and deserts in the south and southwest of the country. This natural diversity in the country's ecoregions and low population density led to Mongolia's unique, but delicate, biodiversity, which thrives in the different transitional zones and harsh continental climate conditions. Mongolia is a refuge for a variety of flora and fauna, many of which are endangered, in the Central and East Asia region. It is the home to two of the 35 WWF global priority ecoregions (the Amur-Heilong and the Altai-Sayan), two United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Natural World Heritage Sites, 11 Ramsar sites, and 70 Important Bird Areas. In addition, roughly 8.71% of the country's total area is considered forest land, with boreal forests covering the north and southern saxaul forests concentrated in the southwest of the country (NFA, 2026).

In recent years, climate change, desertification, unsustainable land-use practices, and insufficient protection of critical ecosystems have been threatening Mongolia's diverse ecosystems. Biodiversity degradation and the impacts of climate change also threaten the livelihoods of both the pastoral rural communities and the rapidly growing urban population. Using the IPCC's Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) scenario, under RCP 8.5 (business-as-usual, high-emission scenario), Mongolia is projected to experience a rise of around 5.3°C by the 2090s, compared to a global average of around 3.7°C (World Bank, 2021). The temperature rise is projected to be 3.4°C, 2.6°C, and 1.4°C under RCP 6.0, 4.5, and 2.6 (with RCP 2.6 as the strongest mitigation scenario), respectively. This above-average temperature increase will have severe implications for human and ecosystem health. Mongolia will also likely see an increase in annual precipitation, resulting in river flooding and flash flooding. While certain areas may experience extreme rainfall events, other areas may experience complex forms of drought and dust storms, including dzud, which are characterized by dry summers followed by cold winters that are detrimental to pastoral farming and food security. Mongolia is highly susceptible to both meteorological and pasture drought, as well as desertification and dust storms, and their frequency and duration may increase with worsening climate change (MECC, 2025).

Mongolia's biodiversity and ecosystems will also be affected by projected climate change, especially its steppe and permafrost landscapes. Mongolia's rate of biomass loss in the steppes is "comparable with the rate of global deforestation of tropical rainforests," and species and biome range shifts are likely to occur (MECC, 2025). Furthermore, its permafrost-covered area is projected to reduce substantially as the global mean temperature increases. It was estimated that the coverage of permafrost zones will reduce by 16.46%–18.31% in the period 2016 to 2035, 33%–61.23% in the period 2046 to 2065, and 74%–94.7% by the end of the century (MET, 2024). This will result in a significant decline in the suitable habitat range for many cornerstone flora and fauna in Mongolia.

Lastly, climate change is projected to impact Mongolia's economic sectors, hampering the country's development and reform efforts. The most affected sectors include agriculture and animal husbandry, with a projected loss of around US$3 million per year under 1.5°C of global warming, and around $12 million under 3°C of global warming (World Bank, 2021). Flash flooding, heat impacts, and water and air pollution will also negatively impact urban populations and the workforce, with extreme heat and rainfall events impacting labour productivity and straining the country's electricity demand. Compounded with poverty and inequality, Mongolia is highly vulnerable to climate change and climate-related disasters.

2.2 Institutional Arrangements

The Mongolian MECC, previously the MET, leads the development and implementation of policies and programs relating to climate change and biodiversity. It also serves as the main liaison between national, subnational, and local governments and stakeholders, as well as international stakeholders. Its Policy and Planning Department is responsible for the planning and implementation of climate change policies and programs, while its Natural Resources Policy and Sustainable Use Department is responsible for the planning and implementation of biodiversity policies and programs. Meanwhile, the Mongolian Climate Change Research and Cooperation Center is responsible for conducting greenhouse gas (GHG) emission inventories, preparing national reports to the UNFCCC, and engaging in research, technology transfer, and other climate change-related activities and engagements.

To enhance climate change governance, Mongolia re-established the National Climate Committee (NCC) in 2023 as a high-level, cross-sectoral, cross-ministerial decision-making body chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and vice-chaired by the Minister of Environment and Tourism (former name). It oversees, coordinates, and ensures cross-sectoral alignment of nationwide actions to fulfill Mongolia's obligations under the UNFCCC, and the Paris Agreement. It also implements the Billion Trees national movement to reduce land degradation and promote climate resilience. The committee consists of representatives from the Office of the President of Mongolia; the Standing Committee on Environment, Food, and Agriculture of the Parliament; the Anti-Desertification Lobby Group of the Parliament; the Ministries of Economy and Development, Food, Agriculture and Light Industry, Energy, Foreign Affairs, Education and Science (former name), Culture (former name), and Health; the Office of the Capital and the Mayor of Ulaanbaatar City; the National Emergency Management Agency; the Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring Agency; the Water Authority; the Forest Authority; the Special Envoy for Climate Change; the Mongolian Academy of Sciences; and the National Garden Park, a state-owned enterprise. The NCC has an Advisory Council, which is responsible for providing science-based information to support decision making on issues related to climate change. The NCC is also responsible for managing and coordinating the approval and overseeing the implementation of the NDC and the NAP to ensure effective collaboration between different core and line ministries and other stakeholders.

Mongolia's climate change and biodiversity policy processes are supported by a number of international development partners. Its NDC 3.0 process was supported by GIZ Mongolia, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Mongolia, Asian Development Bank Mongolia, the Food and Agriculture Organization Mongolia, UNICEF Mongolia, and the NDC Partnership. Its NAP process was supported by the UN Environment Programme with the support of the Green Climate Fund Readiness Programme. Its NBSAP process is currently being supported by the Global Environment Facility and UNDP Mongolia.

3. Status of Key National Climate and Biodiversity Policy Processes

Mongolia is a signatory to all major international environmental conventions and treaties, including their protocols. It has adopted a series of national policies, programs, and plans to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as protect biodiversity, and to comply with its international obligations. This section provides an overview of the status of the main national climate and biodiversity policy strategies and frameworks in Mongolia.

3.1 Vision-2050 Action Plan

In 2020, the Government of Mongolia adopted its long-term national development strategy, Vision-2050, articulating a comprehensive framework to become a leading Asian country in terms of its social development, economic growth, and citizens' quality of life. This strategic document delineates Mongolia's core policy priorities and long-range objectives concerning climate change. Vision-2050 incorporates targeted actions for both mitigation and adaptation, underscoring the nation's commitment to global climate action. It explicitly calls for the establishment of robust legal and institutional mechanisms to address climate-related challenges and outlines articles moving the country toward transitioning to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy (Government of Mongolia, 2020).

3.2 New Revival Policy

The New Revival Policy is designed to support Mongolia's post-pandemic recovery by fostering both domestic and foreign investment. It builds upon the Vision-2050 framework,

which seeks to advance social development, stimulate economic growth, and improve the overall quality of life for Mongolian citizens by mid-century. The policy outlines six key areas for recovery: port infrastructure, energy, industrial development, urban and rural revitalization, green growth, and state productivity. A central component of the Green Growth strategy focuses on promoting environmentally sustainable development. This includes efforts to restore dried lakes, ponds, and rivers, as well as initiatives to transport water to the Gobi region through the construction of dams and reservoirs. Additionally, the strategy encompasses the Billion Tree Initiative, which aims to expand national forest coverage by 9% by 2030 (Government of Mongolia, 2021).

3.3 Nationally Determined Contribution

Mongolia's second NDC (2.0), submitted in 2019, commits to reducing GHG emissions by 22.7% by 2030. The accompanying Action Plan provides a strategic framework for achieving these climate goals, detailing 72 measures across 24 overarching objectives in key sectors such as energy, agriculture, transportation, industrial construction, and waste management. Despite its breadth, the plan falls short in integrating gender considerations, lacking defined targets, indicators, and financial mechanisms to address the distinct effects of climate change on women and other vulnerable populations (UNDP, 2025).

The Cabinet of Mongolia approved the updated NDC 3.0 on September 10, 2025, which outlined Mongolia's climate actions through 2035. This new NDC focuses on mitigation and adaptation sectors. Furthermore, the updated NDC reflects insights from the Global Stocktake—a comprehensive assessment of global progress under the Paris Agreement designed to guide policy-makers in enhancing their climate strategies. In addition, based on the key findings and outcomes of Mongolia's NDC 2.0 stocktaking exercise, the country is further enhancing its adaptation goals and actions in the updated NDC 3.0.

3.4 National Adaptation Plan

In 2024, the NCC endorsed Mongolia's NAP, which will guide efforts through to 2030. The NAP's primary goal is to build resilience and enhance adaptive capacity, mitigating vulnerabilities and improving readiness for climate-related disasters through coordinated and multi-sectoral efforts (MECC, 2025).The plan establishes clear adaptation priorities and delineates targeted actions across critical sectors, including agriculture, water, health, biodiversity, infrastructure, forestry, urban development, and disaster risk management. It also sets cross-cutting objectives aimed at reinforcing the policy, legal, structural, and organizational foundations for climate adaptation while enhancing the knowledge base and capabilities of key stakeholders.

3.5 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

The Government of Mongolia, with support from the Global Environment Facility and UNDP, has prepared an updated NBSAP aligned with the newly adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its global targets. This process began with a comprehensive evaluation of the existing NBSAP (2015–2025) and an assessment of its implementation status, as well as a stocktake of how existing climate and development policies are aligned with the new GBF.

To ensure broad stakeholder engagement, the government also organized a series of consultation workshops around the country to enable a bottom-up approach to biodiversity policy planning. The NBSAP draft seeks to tackle the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and restore at least 30% of priority degraded lands and waters by 2030. It organizes responses around five strategic shifts—outcomes over inputs, valuing and pricing nature, spatial integration, just transition, and knowledge and participation. The scope covers nine implementation pathways spanning ecological networks and restoration; living rivers and water security; species recovery, biosecurity and invasive alien species; clean-heat and nature-positive cities; sustainable production landscapes; biodiversity-safe infrastructure with no-go rules; genetic resources, Traditional Knowledge, and access and benefit sharing; knowledge and innovation; and inclusive governance and equitable benefits.

3.6 Mongolia's Draft Law on Climate Change

Mongolia has been working on a Draft Law on Climate Change, an important tool to provide guiding principles and long-term objectives and goals for mitigation and adaptation, as well as implementation of climate strategies. This legislation aims to strengthen climate governance, enhance cross-sector coordination, establish robust data systems, and promote science-based decision making. The law seeks to support Mongolia's transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future and help attract greater international climate finance. Adopting the climate framework law will have an important signalling effect and demonstrate that the Government of Mongolia understands and accepts the necessity of a transformation to a decarbonized economy and is proactively working toward it.

Table 1. Overview of Mongolia's main national climate and biodiversity-related strategies, frameworks and laws

Strategy, framework or law

Vision 2050 Action Plan	**New Revival Policy**	**NDC**	**NAP**	**NBSAP**	**Draft Law on Climate Change**
Status					
Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Draft under consideration	Draft under consideration
Time frame					
2020–2050	2021–2031	2025–2035	2024–2030	Under review, currently being updated	Not applicable
Lead institution					
Ministry of Economy and Development	Government of Mongolia	MECC (Policy Planning Department)	MECC (Policy Planning Department)	MECC (Department of Natural Resources Policy and Sustainable Use)	MECC, MED

Vision					
By 2050, Mongolia shall become a leading Asian country in terms of its social development, economic growth, and citizens' quality of life.	The New Recovery Policy aims to strengthen Mongolia's economic independence, reduce the negative impact of the coronavirus infection (COVID-19) pandemic on the economy, and promptly address development barriers.	Mongolia intends to achieve a target to mitigate its GHG emissions by 23% by 2030 and 30.3% by 2035, compared to the business-as-usual scenario, excluding land use, land-use change, and forestry.	The NAP aims to enhance the capacity of Mongolia's environmental, social, and economic sectors to adapt to climate change, strengthen resilience against natural and weather-related disasters, and reduce vulnerability and associated risks.	Mongolia's NBSAP mission is: "By 2030, Mongolia conserves representative ecosystems and the ecological connections that sustain them; restores at least 30% of priority degraded lands and waters; maintains living rivers with protected environmental flows; reduces human-driven extinction risk; and mainstreams nature's contributions to people across cities, production landscapes, and infrastructure."	The purpose of this law is to regulate the relationship between mitigating and adapting to climate change, improving resilience, and promoting low-carbon development.
Priority sectors					
• Mining • Agriculture • Energy • Information technology and creative production • Tourism • Transportation and logistics	• Ports • Energy • Industrial • Urban and rural • Green growth • State productivity	<u>Mitigation</u> • Energy • Buildings • Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU) • Waste • Transport • Agriculture <u>Adaptation</u> • Biodiversity • Water resources • Forest resources • Disaster risk reduction	• Ecosystem, biodiversity, and land degradation • Water resources and supply • Forestry • Weather and natural disasters • Livestock and rangeland • Crop farming • Public health • Social security	• Ecological networks and restoration • Living rivers and water security • Species, biosecurity and invasive alien species • Clean-heat, climate and nature-positive cities • Sustainable production landscapes • Biodiversity-safe infrastructure and no-go rules	Each economic sector

Priority sectors					
		• Livestock and pasture management • Crop production • Public health • Livelihoods and social protection • Education • Culture		• Genetic resources, traditional knowledge and access and benefit sharing • Knowledge, innovation, electronic monitoring, reporting & verification and participation	

Source: Government of Mongolia, 2020; Government of Mongolia, 2021; MECC, 2025

4. Overview of the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP Synergies Assessment in Mongolia

The overview table below identifies areas of alignment and disconnects among three national climate and biodiversity-related processes, Mongolia's national development plan, and the draft climate change law. The insights are drawn from a content analysis of relevant documents and interviews with key experts. Table 2 presents a comparative assessment of current governance structures and examines the following strategic elements across these frameworks:

Strategic Elements of the Framework

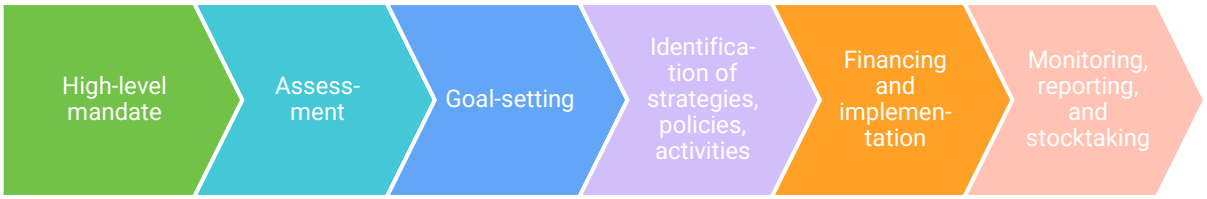


Table 2. Overview of Mongolia's NDC, NAP, and the NBSAP Synergies Assessment

The NDC Process	The NAP Process	The NBSAP Process	Synergy Assessment
✕ There is no high-level mandate from the MECC or bodies such as the NCC or the Cabinet to formally align or cross-reference processes like the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP. Without some type of high-level mandate, Mongolia's policy planning landscape remains fragmented, with different development partners advancing separate processes in a project-based approach that heavily relies on different independent consultants who may not have the scope to align or conduct joint work with the other processes. * The NCC is the horizontal coordination mechanism for climate change, while the MECC's Natural Resources Policy and Sustainable Use Department is the CBD Focal Point and is responsible for the domestic coordination for implementing the CBD, the Cartagena Protocol, and the Nagoya Protocol. It is unclear how the two coordination mechanisms interact. ✓ A Gender Target Gap Assessment for the NDC 3.0 update process was produced. It found that the "absence of gender-responsive approaches in climate policy limits inclusivity and equitable participation" (UNDP, 2025). NDC 3.0 presents an opportunity for strengthening Mongolia's gender integration in climate action. Gender analyses are planned as part of adaptation priority actions in NAPs, while gender equality in biodiversity-related decision making has been included as Target 19 of the NBSAP draft.			
✓ An emissions inventory was included in the NDC 3.0. * The NDC 3.0 process involved mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity experts in some sectoral working groups, but not all.	✓ The NAP document contains a climate vulnerability and risk assessment. * For the NAP process, biodiversity experts were involved, but it was not aligned with the NBSAP process. ✓ The NAP includes 10 key priority and cross-sectoral sectors. emissions inventory	✓ The NBSAP process includes an assessment of biodiversity degradation (including climate impacts) based on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) methodology.	* Different documents partially referenced each other's assessments. The current draft NBSAP (September 2025) references the NAP and highlights climate vulnerabilities related to biodiversity. It mentions the NDC and points out the mitigation potential of nature-based solutions. The NAP mentions the NDC and outlines Mongolia's GHG emissions and inventory. The NDC 3.0 does not mention the NBSAP or NAP but does include a description of anticipated climate risks and impacts.

High-level mandate

Assessment

The NDC Process	The NAP Process	The NBSAP Process	Synergy Assessment
✓ The NDC includes priority sectors for mitigation and identifies priority sectors highly vulnerable to climate risks. ✓ A Gender Target Gap Assessment for the NDC 3.0 was produced.	cross-sectoral sectors. ✓ A gender analysis is planned as part of the NAP's adaptation priority actions.	* For the NBSAP process, mitigation and adaptation experts from the NDC and NAP processes were not involved in the planning process, but climate change experts were. ✗ The NBSAP does not include priority sectors, but it does include implementation pathways. ✓ The NBSAP includes gender equality in biodiversity-related decision making as Target 19.	✗ Stakeholder participation across the different processes was inconsistent. The timeline of the respective processes, as well as the fragmented policy landscape and the involvement of multiple international development partners and consultants, complicate coordination of joint stakeholder engagement. The lack of a high-level mandate to coordinate and rigid terms of reference for development partners and consultants prevented more joint efforts. ✓ Priority sectors considered highly vulnerable are aligned between the NDC and NAP. However, the NDC also includes energy, buildings, transport, waste and IPPU, which are not included in the NAP. The NBSAP does not identify priority sectors, but the implementation pathways of some can be loosely aligned with priority sectors, such as agriculture and forestry. ✗ The three strategies do not have a common framing of gender or refer to the Gender Target Gap Assessment. While the members of the Mongolian National Committee on Gender Equality were included as members of the sectoral working groups on disaster risk management and adaptation and on public health, livelihoods, and social protection in the NDC, they were not included in the NAP process.

The NDC Process	The NAP Process	The NBSAP Process	Synergy Assessment
✗ The NDC does not include a common narrative or statement on climate and nature. * The NDC includes an adaptation component but does not specifically call out or reference the NAP as the main mechanism to implement climate adaptation goals. * The NDC identifies ecosystems as critical carbon sinks and includes specific objectives and goals for biodiversity and the forestry sector. Identified targets do not align with the NAP or NBSAP.	✗ The NAP does not include a common narrative or statement on climate and nature. ✓ The NAP mentions the NBSAP and identifies its approval and implementation as a priority action. The NAP references the NDC and its alignment with it concerning its objectives, scope, and activities. The NAP also references Vision 2050 and links specific targets and activities to it. * The NAP identifies ecosystems, biodiversity, land degradation, and desertification as adaptation priorities. The related target aligns closely with the NBSAP target. Both the NAP and NDC identify biodiversity and ecosystems as highly vulnerable priority sectors. However, objectives and targets do not align.	✓ The NBSAP draft includes extensive mention of climate change and its impacts across biodiversity. ✓ The NBSAP draft references the NAP and NDC. * The NBSAP references the importance of climate adaptation and reducing GHG emissions through maintaining and enhancing carbon sinks and ecosystems. There is some overlap between the high-level targets in the draft NBSAP and NAP, but to a much lesser extent with the NDC.	* The NBSAP highlights the interconnectedness of the climate and biodiversity crises, which could set the tone for a more integrated approach. However, neither the NAP nor the NDC include a common narrative or statement on climate and nature. * There is a general understanding among stakeholders interviewed that Mongolia's NDC, NAP, and NBSAP should be aligned with Mongolia's national development plans, policies, and strategies, including Vision 2050. They should all be contributing to common goals, objectives, and national priorities. However, the content analysis revealed limited referencing and alignment between these national strategies' overarching goals. * The NDC, NAP, and NBSAP recognize ecosystems and biodiversity as important carbon sinks, but also their vulnerability to climate change and non-climatic drivers. However, related goals and targets differ.

The NDC Process	The NAP Process	The NBSAP Process	Synergy Assessment
* For the NDC 3.0 process, mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity experts were included via sectoral working groups and tried to actively align adaptation priorities. The degree of alignment varies sector by sector. Additional adaptation activities were identified for NDC 3.0. The NBSAP team provided their inputs to the NDC 3.0 team. * In general, the NDC 3.0 process sought to minimize trade-offs and the impacts of response measures.	* For the NAP process, biodiversity experts were involved, but the NAP was not aligned with the NBSAP process due to differing timelines. * It is not evident that the NAP process assessed trade-offs. ✓ "Promote Ecosystem-Based Adaptation and Nature-Based Solutions" is a dedicated focus area in the NAP, and "Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Land Degradation, and Desertification" is a priority area.	* Climate change experts were involved in the planning process, but not experts from the NDC and NAP processes. ✓ The NBSAP team identified multiple issues with the proposed actions in the NAP and NDC 3.0, and they intend to address these issues through safeguarding activities identified in the NBSAP. ✓ The draft NBSAP makes reference to multiple large-scale ecosystem-based approaches, including reforestation, protected areas, improving connectivity and management, as well as the prevention of forest fires. ✓	* The teams responsible for each planning process were engaged and consulted to varying extents throughout. However, inconsistent timelines, the absence of a strong overarching directive for coordination, and inflexible guidelines for development partners and consultants hindered more collaborative efforts. * The evaluation of measures and activities—including associated trade-offs—differed across the various planning processes. For instance, the NDC team carried out a policy analysis during its planning phase, aiming to reduce trade-offs and mitigate the impacts of response measures. Meanwhile, the NBSAP team examined trade-offs and assessed how proposed activities would affect biodiversity. They shared their findings with the NDC 3.0 sectoral working groups and plan to address these concerns through safeguarding actions outlined in the NBSAP. In contrast, there was no clear indication that the NAP process team conducted a trade-off assessment.

The NDC Process	The NAP Process	The NBSAP Process	Synergy Assessment
✓ The NDC identifies large-scale, ecosystem-based approaches, specifically focusing on the forestry sector, and emphasizes the importance of creating resilient ecosystems.			✓ All three national strategies incorporate large-scale ecosystem-based approaches. While not explicitly designed as cross-cutting, their overlapping activities contribute to multiple goals related to biodiversity and climate protection. However, their specific targets remain largely distinct.
✓ An NDC Investment Plan will be developed. ✓ An NDC Action Plan will be developed.	✓ The NAP document contains the costing of adaptation activities and 99 actionable activities.	✓ A costing analysis will be conducted. ✓ An implementation plan will be developed.	* The NDC and the NAP processes did not consider joint financing or implementation. However, the NBSAP process will consider the biodiversity-related activities contained in NDC 3.0 and the NAP and seek joint-financing opportunities.

Identification of strategies, policies, activities

Financing and implementation

The NDC Process	The NAP Process	The NBSAP Process	Synergy Assessment
* Mongolia currently relies on the GHG inventory from its Fourth National Communication (2024), the country's most recent submission. While the Second Biennial Update Report (2023) remains a useful reference, the Fourth National Communication provides the latest data. Mongolia is also preparing its first Biennial Transparency Report (BTR), which will further enhance the transparency of its GHG reporting.	✓ The NAP includes a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework, with 99 actions and specific indicators and targets to achieve outcomes. ✗ Awareness of the Adaptation Communication appears to be low among Mongolian stakeholders.	✓ Each of the national-level actions identified is linked to the global GBF targets and includes specific indicators.	✗ There is limited awareness among government stakeholders and development partners of international reporting requirements, particularly under the United Arab Emirates Framework for Global Climate Resilience (UAE FGCR). Reporting appears to be often ad hoc, lacking consistency, standardized procedures, and a centralized inventory. ✗ It is not evident that qualitative and quantitative indicators between the NDC and NAP are aligned with different policy strategies to facilitate reporting to the global stocktake under the Paris Agreement. The identified NBSAP targets and subsequent indicators have been aligned with those in the GBF. There are no common indicators across the three strategies.

Monitoring, reporting, and stocktaking

Source: The authors

5. Existing Challenges to Fostering Synergistic Actions for Biodiversity and Climate

During the interviews, stakeholders and experts highlighted several challenges within Mongolia's national and political context that hinder stronger synergies and policy coherence between climate change and biodiversity efforts.

- **There is currently no high-level mandate from the MECC, NCC, or Cabinet to formally align or cross-reference national processes such as the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP.** As a result, Mongolia's policy planning remains fragmented, with development partners advancing separate, project-based initiatives that rely on independent consultants—often without the scope or authority to coordinate across processes. This lack of integration leads to inefficiencies, duplication, and missed opportunities for synergy. The gap appears to stem from limited awareness of the benefits of a more coherent and unified approach to climate and biodiversity action.

- **Due to limited coordination, Mongolia's climate and biodiversity policy processes continue to operate in isolation**. For example, the adaptation component of the NDC 3.0 did not build on existing analyses from the NAP. Instead, it conducted a separate climate vulnerability and risk assessment and reworded several objectives and actions from the NAP, without referencing or integrating the NAP directly. Similarly, the ongoing NBSAP process carried out its own stocktaking assessments on climate impacts to biodiversity and ecosystems, which could have been done jointly with the NAP or NDC 3.0 teams. The NBSAP has also identified gaps in biodiversity safeguards within the NDC 3.0 and NAP, but rather than addressing these gaps collaboratively, it plans to

develop standalone mechanisms. These duplications underscore the urgent need for stronger linkages and greater coherence across Mongolia's climate and biodiversity planning frameworks.

- **Lack of consideration on policy coherence and synergies:** Stakeholders noted a limited understanding of policy coherence and synergies across Mongolia's environmental frameworks. Due to low awareness and weak institutional coordination, there is no high-level mandate to align mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity policies.

- **Misaligned timelines.** The NDC 3.0, NAP, and NBSAP processes follow separate timelines, making alignment difficult without a high-level mandate from the Mongolian government—despite the possibility of synchronization under existing international frameworks.

- **A major challenge across the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP processes is the absence of consistent and integrated monitoring, reporting and verification/MEL systems for tracking progress on climate mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity conservation**. Although some efforts have been made to align targets, biodiversity-related objectives in the NDC and NAP remain out of sync with the GBF and the new NBSAP, largely due to misaligned timelines. Limited awareness of the KMGBF among climate policy-makers further hinders integration. This lack of alignment across goals, targets, and indicators leads to confusion, inefficiencies, duplication of effort, and growing data management challenges.

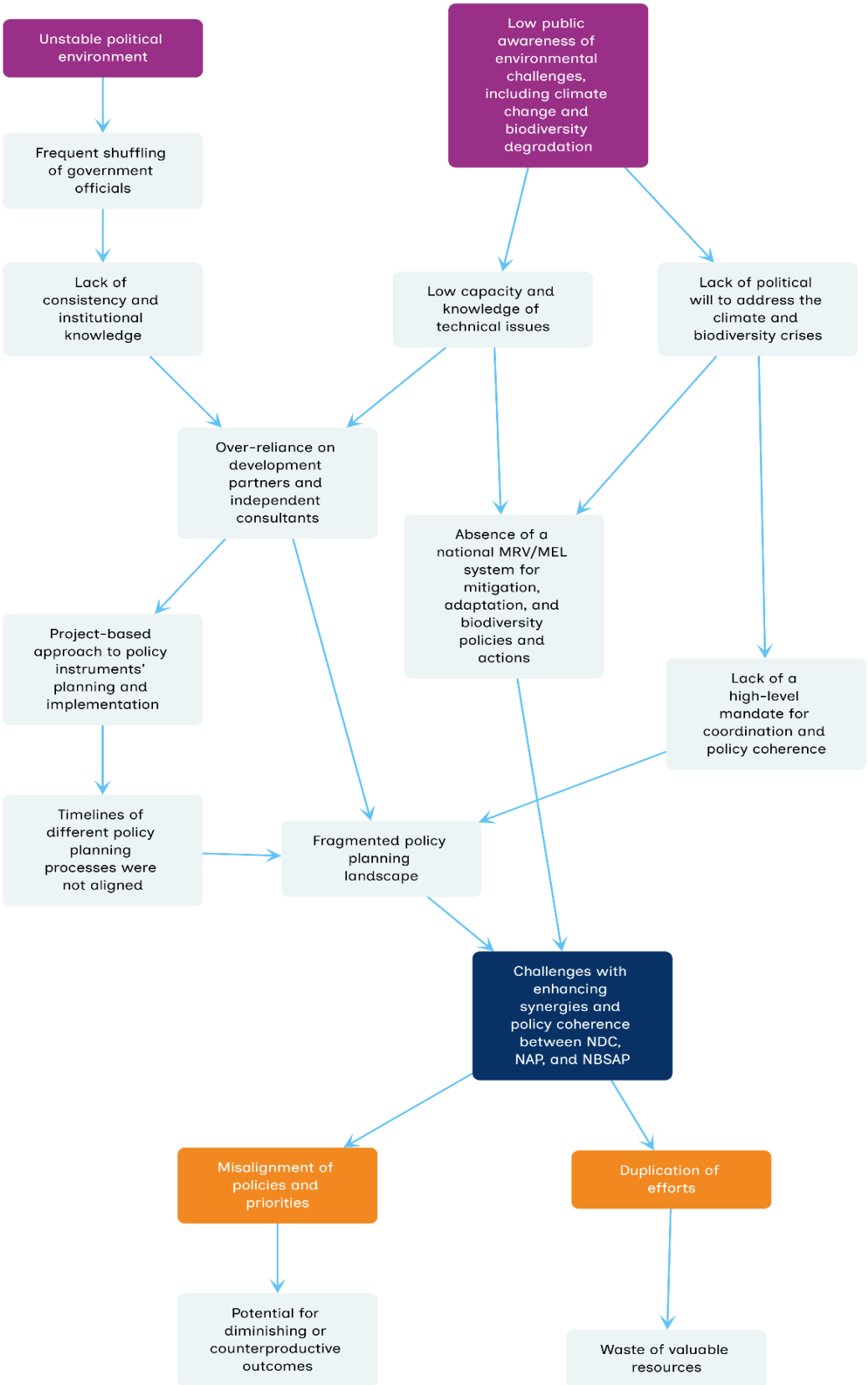
- **Over-reliance on development partners.** The over-reliance on international development partners and independent consultants also contributed to a fragmented policy landscape and a project-based approach to policy planning and implementation, which ultimately leads to duplicated efforts, misaligned goals and actions, and potential trade-offs, including maladaptation.

- **Lack of or uneven capacity and knowledge regarding technical issues across ministries within the government and sectors:** Different stakeholders and experts noted that many government officials lack the technical expertise, especially the NDC focal points in different line ministries due to the frequent turnover of personnel, to actively engage in the NDC 3.0 update, as well as the development of the NBSAP and NAP, without targeted capacity building. While MECC staff are generally well-informed, many officials from line ministries, including designated NDC focal points, are unfamiliar with the NDC framework and broader climate policies. Additionally, limited awareness of climate change among parliamentarians and senior decision makers remains a barrier to securing high-level commitment.

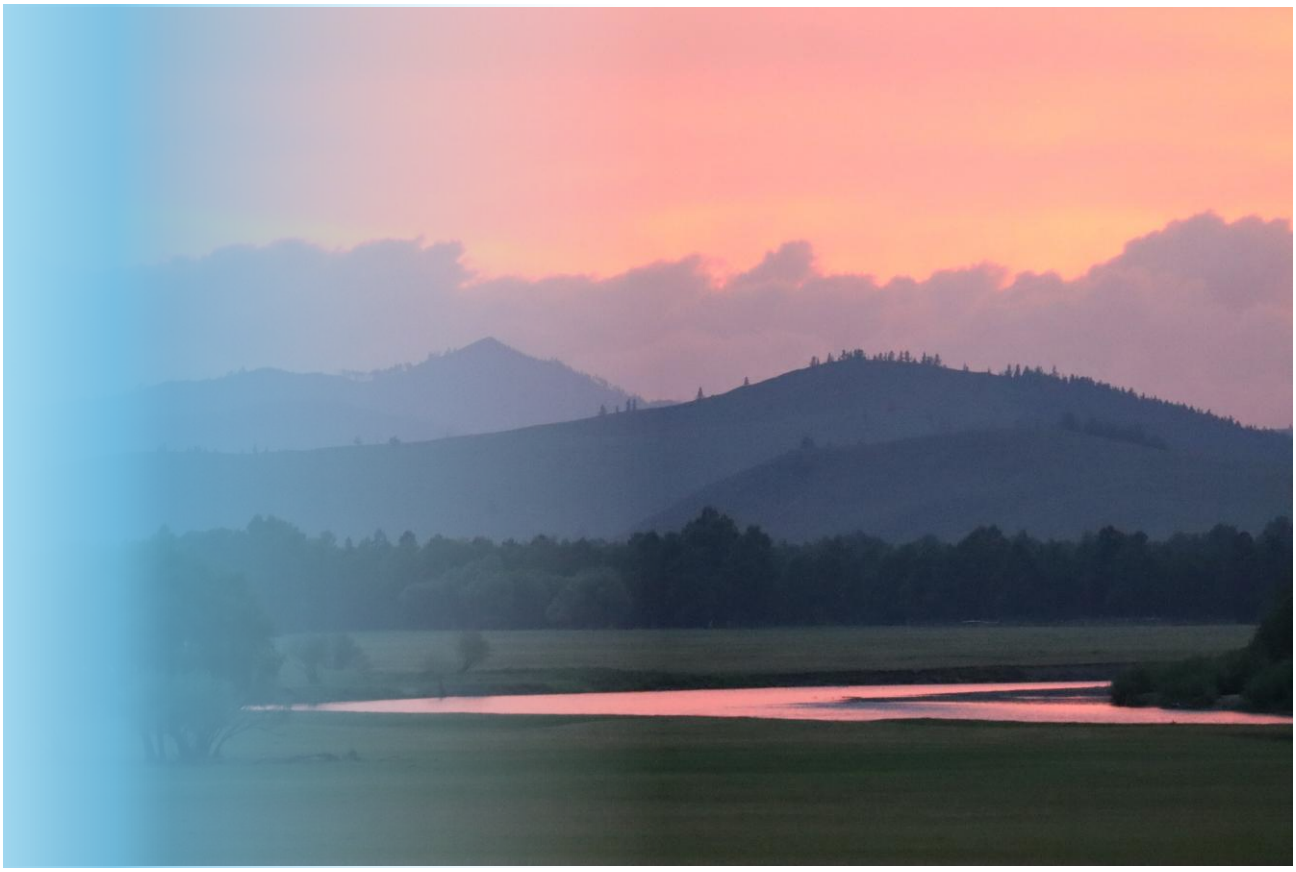
- **Frequent shuffling of government officials.** Stakeholders noted that an unstable political environment often leads to frequent government turnover and the reshuffling of key officials, hindering long-term planning and institutional capacity building. The loss of key champions during the NDC 3.0 process significantly delayed progress and undermined efforts to strengthen policy coherence and synergies.

The following problem tree illustrates the interconnected challenges identified and how they reinforce one another.

Figure 1. Problem tree analysis: Synergies



Source: The authors



6. Opportunities to Strengthen Synergistic Actions for Biodiversity and Climate

Table 3 provides an overview of general and specific recommendations based on the key expert interviews, content analysis, and identified challenges and gaps. The recommendations aim to foster stronger integration and synergy between national climate and biodiversity policies.

Overarching recommendations:

- ✓ Strengthen MECC's institutional mandate and capacity to lead and coordinate climate and biodiversity policy planning processes in a more country-driven and integrated manner. This should include targeted capacity-building and training initiatives; enhanced support for coordinating the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP processes; and the development of a robust knowledge management strategy or system to preserve institutional memory, facilitate information sharing, and ensure continuity across programs and stakeholders.

- ✓ Targeted awareness-raising efforts should be undertaken to build an understanding of the benefits of integrated planning and the synergies between these processes, thereby fostering more efficient, collaborative, and impactful implementation.

- ✓ Development partners should intensify efforts to support public awareness and capacity-building initiatives on climate change and biodiversity in Mongolia. This includes launching targeted education campaigns that highlight the interlinkages

between environmental degradation, natural disasters, and socio-economic development, particularly aimed at high-level decision makers and parliamentarians.

- ✓ Development partners should prioritize capacity building for government officials and technical staff, especially within line ministries, to strengthen evidence-based policy-making. To enhance accessibility and relevance, international guidance and resources should be localized and translated into Mongolian, ensuring broader uptake and more effective implementation.

- ✓ Better align the timelines for the NDC 4.0 process, as well as updates to the NAP and NBSAP, planned for 2029/2030.

Table 3. Opportunities to strengthen synergies between Mongolia's main national climate and biodiversity-related strategies

Opportunities to strengthen synergistic actions for biodiversity and climate	*Element of assessment*
✓ **Establish a technical-level coordination sub-mechanism under the NCC to facilitate regular engagement among focal points and technical officers from relevant line ministries responsible for implementing the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP.** This working-level platform should promote consistent dialogue, joint planning, and information exchange to complement high-level decision making and ensure operational coherence across climate and biodiversity initiatives. ✓ **Address fragmentation and enhance policy coherence.** It is recommended that the MECC, in coordination with high-level bodies such as the NCC and the Cabinet, issue a formal mandate to align and cross-reference national climate and biodiversity planning processes, including the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP, and take existing national development strategies, such as Vision 2050 and the New Revival Policy, into consideration, particularly when formulating targets and activities. This mandate should be supported by clear institutional guidance and coordination mechanisms to ensure that development partners and consultants are working within a unified framework. ✓ **Leverage the upcoming Climate Change Law as a legal foundation to formally mandate policy coherence and integration between Mongolia's NDC and NAP processes.** The law should explicitly recognize and promote alignment between climate change and biodiversity strategies, such as the NBSAP, to ensure synergistic planning, reduce fragmentation, and enhance the effectiveness of national environmental action. ✓ **Integrate targeted capacity-building and awareness-raising initiatives into future policy planning processes to promote a more inclusive, intersectional understanding of gender.** This should clarify the distinction	High-level mandate

between gender, social inclusion, and social protection, and support the mainstreaming of non-binary and diverse gender perspectives across climate and biodiversity policies in Mongolia.

Assessment

- ✓ **Strengthen cross-referencing between national strategies.** Ensure that the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP consistently reference each other's assessments, such as climate vulnerabilities, GHG emissions, and biodiversity impacts, to promote coherence and shared understanding. This will improve integration and support more informed, synergistic planning.
- ✓ **Mandate inclusive and joint stakeholder engagement.** Establish a high-level directive to coordinate stakeholder engagement across climate and biodiversity planning processes. This should include flexible terms of reference for development partners and consultants, enabling cross-process participation and reducing fragmentation caused by overlapping timelines and siloed efforts.
- ✓ **Harmonize sectoral priorities across strategies.** Conduct a strategic review to align priority sectors across the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP. Expand the NAP to include sectors such as energy, transport, and waste, and ensure the NBSAP identifies relevant priority sectors to enhance cross-sectoral planning and implementation.
- ✓ **Standardize gender integration across strategies.** Develop a unified approach to gender mainstreaming across the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP, informed by the Gender Target Gap Assessment. Ensure consistent inclusion of gender equality stakeholders, such as the Mongolian National Committee on Gender Equality, in all relevant planning processes to promote inclusive and equitable policy outcomes.

Goal-setting

- ✓ **Develop a unified narrative across national strategies.** Policy-makers should incorporate a shared narrative into the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP that explicitly highlights the interconnectedness of climate change and biodiversity loss. This overarching statement would set the tone for integrated planning and signal a commitment to addressing both crises through synergistic approaches.
- ✓ **Align strategic goals with national development priorities.** Ensure that the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP are explicitly aligned with Mongolia's broader development frameworks, including Vision 2050. This requires cross-referencing overarching goals and objectives across strategies to reinforce their contributions to national priorities and promote policy coherence.

✓ **Harmonize ecosystem-related targets across strategies.** Recognizing the dual role of ecosystems as carbon sinks and vulnerable assets, policy-makers should harmonize related goals and targets across the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP. This alignment will strengthen integrated ecosystem management, reduce duplication, and enhance the effectiveness of climate and biodiversity interventions.

Identification of strategies, policies, activities

✓ **Establish a coordinated planning directive and flexible guidelines.** National policy-makers should issue a formal directive to synchronize timelines and coordinate across climate and biodiversity planning processes. This should be supported by adaptable guidelines for development partners and consultants to enable more collaborative, integrated engagement throughout the planning cycle.

✓ **Harmonize targets within ecosystem-based approaches.** Given the shared reliance on ecosystem-based strategies across the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP, national policy-makers should initiate a review to harmonize specific targets and identify opportunities for joint implementation. This will enhance synergies, reduce duplication, and strengthen the collective impact of climate and biodiversity actions.

✓ **Consider a standardized trade-off assessment approach across climate and biodiversity planning processes.** To ensure consistency and informed decision making, policy-makers should mandate the inclusion of trade-off assessments in all major environmental planning processes, including the NAP. A standardized framework for evaluating policy impacts should be developed and shared across teams to promote cross-learning and safeguard biodiversity and climate objectives.

Financing and implementation

✓ **Promote joint financing and coordinated implementation across the NDC, NAP, and NBSAP processes to enhance efficiency, reduce duplication, and strengthen synergies between climate and biodiversity actions.** Policy-makers should build on the NBSAP's approach by institutionalizing mechanisms for integrated planning and resource mobilization across all three frameworks.

✓ **Actively engage the Ministry of Finance in climate and biodiversity policy-making to enhance coherence and secure financing for unconditional activities.** Targeted awareness raising and capacity building for ministry officials and technical staff should be prioritized to strengthen their understanding of environmental issues and support integrated, cross-sectoral decision making.

- ✓ **Strengthen awareness and institutional capacity for international reporting.** National policy-makers should prioritize awareness-raising and capacity-building initiatives for government stakeholders and development partners on international reporting obligations, particularly under the UAE FGCR and the GBF. Establishing standardized procedures and a centralized inventory system will help ensure consistent, coordinated, and timely reporting.
- ✓ **Align or identify common high-level indicators across climate and biodiversity strategies**. Policy-makers should initiate a technical review to harmonize qualitative and quantitative indicators across the NDC, NAP, and other relevant strategies. This alignment will facilitate coherent reporting to the global stocktake under the Paris Agreement and the GBF's Global Review, while also enhancing policy integration and reducing duplication.
- ✓ **Capitalize on the development of the monitoring, reporting and verification system for NDC 3.0**, supported by the NDC Partnership, as a strategic opportunity to align it with the MEL system of the NAP and the monitoring framework of the NBSAP. This alignment should aim to harmonize indicators, streamline joint monitoring and reporting processes, and minimize duplication of efforts. Additionally, GIZ Mongolia and UNDP Mongolia should coordinate to better align the implementation plans of NDC 3.0 and the NBSAP, ensuring coherence across climate and biodiversity actions and enhancing overall programmatic efficiency.

Source: The authors

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Naiman Zovkhis Building, 3rd floor, Seoul Street Sukhbaatar District, Ulaanbaatar 14251, Mongolia
T: +976 11 312282

E: giz-mongolei@giz.de
I: www.giz.de

Authors:

Anika Terton & Jeffrey Qi, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Responsible:

Anna Schreyögg, Head of IKI Support Project for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement (SPA)

Bastian Flury, Green Portfolio Manager, GIZ Mongolia

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