

# Synergies Between Biodiversity and Climate Policy Frameworks

## A Series of Thematic Papers



## Acknowledgements

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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 Eastern Finland – Stockholm Environment Institute), Andrea

Bender (GIZ), Alexandre Chausson (Nature-based Solutions Initiative – University of Oxford), McKenna Davis (Ecologic Institute), Matthew Gouett (IISD), Benedikt Ibele (GIZ), Lili Ilieva (Consultant), Marcel Kok (PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency), Veronica Lo (UN consultant), Dai Min (GIZ China), Aracely Salazar Antón (GIZ Ecuador), Zita Sebesvari (United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security), Terese Thoni (UFZ), David Uzsoki (IISD), Yves Zinngrebe (UFZ), and an anonymous reviewer.

All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the authors of each Thematic Paper.



## Synergies Between Biodiversity and Climate Policy Frameworks

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, both at the ecosystem and at the 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 (IPBES).

Policy efforts addressing both challenges in an integrated manner, however, remain limited. While decision-makers and negotiators at

relevant forums, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), are aware of the necessity of integrated approaches, few effective and practical examples exist to show how to make the best use of the synergies and avoid the trade-offs with respect to both policy design and implementation.

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. The 26th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UNFCCC, held in November 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland, UK, featured a strong focus on nature. Based on the [Leaders' Pledge for Nature](#) and the [G7 Nature Compact](#), the UK Presidency of COP 26 shaped the summit around a "Nature Campaign" theme that strongly advocated ecosystem and biodiversity conservation. The theme also highlighted nature's contributions to and synergies with climate action and sustainable development, including through nature-based solutions (NbS) and programmes for a green

recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The **Glasgow Climate Pact** recognises the interlinked global crises of climate change and biodiversity loss and the critical roles of protecting, conserving, and restoring nature and ecosystems in delivering benefits for climate adaptation and mitigation, all while ensuring social and environmental safeguards. Several pledges, such as the **Glasgow Declaration on Forests and Land Use**, underpin the strong commitment by countries to sustainable land use and production and consumption. In the run-up to CBD COP 15 scheduled to be held in the second half of 2022 in Kunming, China, where parties are expected to adopt a **global biodiversity framework for the post-2020 era**, the opening of the meeting in October 2021 further served to underscore the linkages between climate change and nature. Via the **Kunming Declaration**, CBD parties commit to increasing the application of ecosystem-based approaches (also to be referred to as Nbs) to address biodiversity loss, restore degraded ecosystems, boost resilience, mitigate

and adapt to climate change, support sustainable food production, and promote health, among others. Highlighting that these approaches do not replace the priority actions needed to urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a way that is consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement, countries also commit to further enhance collaboration and coordinate actions with ongoing multilateral environmental agreements such as the UNFCCC.

In this context, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), via the IKI “Support Project for the Design and Implementation of the New Global Biodiversity Framework (BioFrame)” and the IKI “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. 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 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. The increased cognition of the role of nature within the climate regime witnessed at UNFCCC COP 26 is a promising step towards bridging the climate and biodiversity agendas. The ongoing CBD negotiations for a post-2020 global biodiversity framework 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 development and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans, 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. While it builds on the Ecosystem Approach, it specifically addresses social and economic challenges and underscores the role of ecosystem management for sustainable development. The concept, which has been defined internationally within an UNEA 5.2 resolution, 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.
- ▶ Reorganising 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 recognising 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 multi-stakeholder co-operation mechanisms, means to enhance accountability, and tools for mainstreaming biodiversity and climate considerations into development planning and sectoral policies.



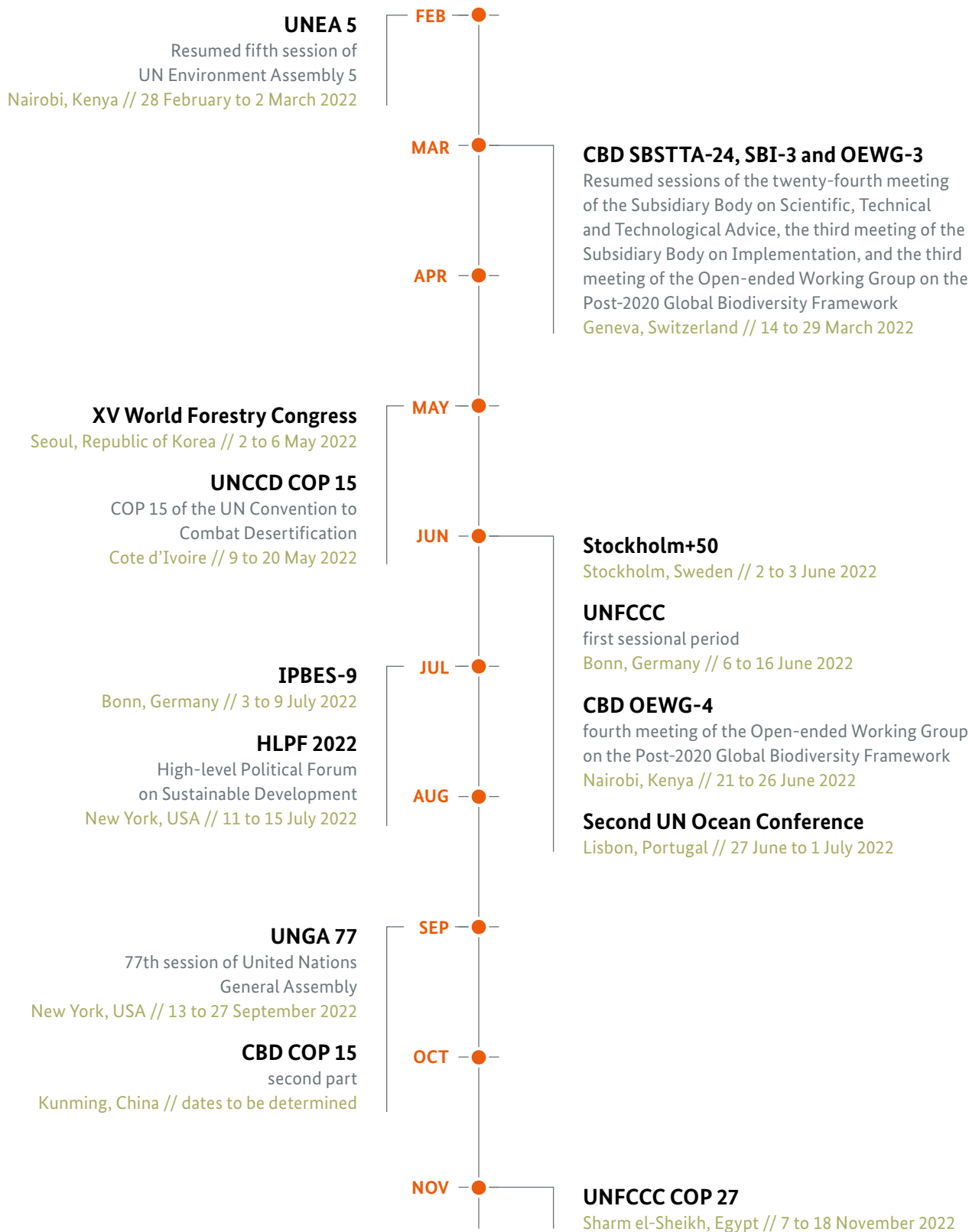
- ▶ Boosting cooperation and strengthening financing for synergistic international approaches will be decisive for more integrated climate–biodiversity national and local governance. Collaboration across the UNFCCC and CBD financial mechanisms and joint mobilisation of resources can play a key role. 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 harmonisation 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 co-ordination in implementation and budget planning to maximise synergies and minimise 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 scrutinising 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

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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.

### Series of Papers Edited by:

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Daniel Plugge (GIZ)

### Suggested Citation:

Terton, A., Tsioumani, E., Förster, J. & Morchain, D. (2022). 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).

### Responsible:

Rhena Hoffmann, Anna-Pia Schreyögg

### Design and editing:

kipconcept gmbh, Bonn

### URL links:

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### On behalf of:

Federal Ministry for the Environment,  
Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and  
Consumer Protection (BMUV)  
Berlin and Bonn

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

May 2022

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