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BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING & INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE: KEY LEARNINGS FROM LATIN AMERICA



Fisherman working at Golfo de Morrosquillo,
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**“THE BEAUTY OF
THE TWO ECLAC
STUDIES IS THAT
THEY SHOW
HOW BY UNITING
THE SOCIO-
ECONOMIC, THE
GOVERNANCE
AND THE
ENVIRONMENTAL
DIMENSIONS, WE
WILL BE ABLE
TO DELIVER ON
THE KUNMING-
MONTREAL GBF.”**

- Thierry Dudermel

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Biodiversity mainstreaming, rights-based approaches and innovative governance are key to achieve transformative change in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The region has many positive experiences, which could facilitate an early implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and contribute to interregional and international dialogues.

In September 2019, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean co-hosted a workshop of high-level biodiversity experts from the LAC region¹ to share their experiences and visions to move towards sustainable development and to contribute to the elaboration of the GBF. As a follow-up, ECLAC conducted two studies exploring biodiversity mainstreaming² and innovative governance³ for transformative change based on practical cases. Both studies aimed at identifying and comparing primary factors that facilitate or impede biodiversity mainstreaming and innovative governance. They also aimed at increasing knowledge on the challenges and opportunities encountered and at promoting their scaling-up through positive examples.

During CBD COP15 in Montreal, ECLAC and the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework-EU support project organized a side event, gathering experts from the region, Africa and Europe to present the studies and discuss their results.



Coffe beans harvest
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1. PROGRESSING IN BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING

Mainstreaming biodiversity in the productive, economic, and financial sectors is key to implement the GBF and is at the heart of several of its targets (e.g., Target 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19) including a specific one on the matter (Target 14), calling to “Ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes, poverty eradication strategies, strategic environmental assessments, environmental impact assessments and, as appropriate, national accounting, within and across all levels of government and across all sectors”. ECLAC’s report analyzed ten case studies of biodiversity mainstreaming in Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru at both national and subnational scales (cities, localities, subnational governments). It explored challenges, opportunities and lessons learned as to how mainstreaming biodiversity in the agriculture, fisheries, forestry, financial, manufacturing, infrastructure and tourism sectors can catalyze transition towards a comprehensive sustainable development.

The main challenges identified were:

1. There is a **lack of understanding among decision-makers** in governmental and business sectors **about the role of biodiversity in human wellbeing**, and a limited understanding of how its loss or degradation affects economic, productive and financial sectors in the region.
2. Many of the **socio-economic benefits** (e.g. improved incomes, jobs creation and better institutional coordination) **are not accounted for and/or highlighted**, reinforcing the false idea that biodiversity contributes almost nothing to development.
3. There is a **strong need for a common language** around key elements linked to biodiversity within and among sectors. Guidelines, such as biodiversity-related taxonomies and typologies, were identified as a potential way to engage financial sectors (e.g. in the design of biodiversity-related programmes and policies).
4. Mainstreaming biodiversity remains **subject to political and decision-makers’ will and commitment**, from the design and implementation, to the scaling-up and multiplication of initiatives. In addition, the high fluctuation of government authorities and officials makes coordination difficult and sometimes results in setbacks.
5. **Data on biodiversity mainstreaming is very limited** and, in some cases, inexistent. None of the initiatives studied has developed indicators/metrics for biodiversity mainstreaming in economic and productive sectors.

The case studies provided many examples of good regional practices for the sustainable use of biodiversity. They showed that mainstreaming has a multi-dimensional perspective and that investing in biodiversity has not only environmental returns, but also positive effects on social and economic wellbeing and development. In Chile, for instance, the State gave exclusive access to benthic resources⁴ to local fishermen’s cooperatives, as long as they develop a sound

sustainable management plan, which obliges them to organize themselves with a long-term vision and join with researchers for this purpose. This measure has resulted in a 20% increase in fishermen’s salaries (on average) in addition to allowing the recovery of several commercial species populations.

In addition to job creation and increased wages, other benefits from **good practices** included:

- + capacity building to boost employability;
- + diversification of productive activities;
- + transformation of institutions;
- + broader policy mix;
- + assured access of local communities to their environment’s natural resources;
- + promotion of cultural changes related to sustainability and inclusion, resulting in active participation and related decision making by women, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities.

Across the case studies, the interventions’ multi-dimensional benefits (e.g. economic, social, and environmental) were a strong incentive to different involved actors on the ground and to overcome difficulties during their implementation. Those with a developed bottom-up perspective and a strong actor commitment were also crucial in overcoming different types of external and internal barriers.

2. CO-PRODUCTION OF INNOVATIVE BIODIVERSITY GOVERNANCE BY ALL

The report on governance takes an innovative perspective and focuses on multidimensional, multilevel and multi-stakeholder processes. It considers all institutions, rules, processes, networks and stakeholders that formulate, participate in and implement decisions designed to change the current structures and paradigms that have a negative impact on biological diversity. For this purpose, it uses the four approaches proposed by the IPBES in its report⁵ on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services published in 2019: **integrative, inclusive, informed, and adaptive**.

Innovative governance is a transversal lever in the GBF. The study analyzed 9 of the 10 case studies identified in the report on biodiversity mainstreaming in Latin America and the Caribbean from Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru. It also focused on an additional case from Colombia. It assessed how the four approaches mentioned above have been implemented in projects in the agriculture, fisheries, forestry, financial, manufacturing, infrastructure, and tourism sectors. The paper has a strong focus on bottom-up experiences, focusing on projects built with a strong and active participation of agents of change like IPLCs, women and youth.

¹ See Expertise on #4: Perspectives from Latin America and the Caribbean on Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Governance: <https://cutt.ly/p3EK7js> and two short movies of the workshop: <https://youtu.be/2ddpMPcoG-k> and <https://youtu.be/-OxdYwn27AO>

² See V. Alvarado, M. Tambutti and A. Rankovic, “Experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean with mainstreaming biodiversity in the productive, economic and financial sectors”, ECLAC, 2022. Link: <https://cutt.ly/c3EZxVv>

³ See G. Catacora-Vargas, M. Tambutti, V. Alvarado and A. Rankovic, “Governance approaches and practices in Latin America and the Caribbean for transformative change for biodiversity”, ECLAC, 2022. Link: <https://cutt.ly/W3EZQej>

⁴ Resources that perform a preponderant part of their life cycle in direct association or near a substrate, such as sea urchins, limpets, clams, octopuses and crabs.

⁵ See E. S. Brondizio, J. Settele, S. Díaz, and H. T. Ngo (editors): Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany, 2019. <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment>



Caliterra vineyard, Wine, Climate Change and Biodiversity Program, Chile © MarcelaMarquez

Both studies share many of the identified challenges and lessons learned. Additional difficulties across the cases studied include:

- + very limited human and financial capabilities and coordination in the public sector;
- + strongly centralized public procedures that are supposed to enable support for the territorial implementation of biodiversity projects;
- + lack of regulations with a territorial approach or with locally adapted frameworks;
- + necessary transdisciplinary, biocultural and landscape visions rarely adopted;
- + policy and operational coherence not always moving at the same speed;
- + fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources requires strengthening and decisive management by States to promote wider implementation.

Based on the numerous good practices found in the study, we can also conclude that:

1. The sustainable use of biodiversity using a territorial and biocultural approach must be considered as an effective conservation strategy. It contributes to a holistic view of humans and nature, for instance by respecting the rights of the direct users of biodiversity on the ground and empowering actors with a direct interest in its conservation.
2. Human and collective rights depend directly and indirectly on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. On the other hand, ensuring human rights can in turn contribute to environment sustainability, particularly through the perpetuation of traditional ways of live. A rights-based approach to conservation implies the strengthening of capacities of those groups with greater disadvantages and less representativeness.
3. The implementation of transformative governance should be catalyzed and enhanced by a proactive public sector, open to an active public-private, and inter- and intra-sectoral participation.
4. Transformative processes in favor of biodiversity require a long-term management, but also legally secured access to natural resources.

Although they weren't explicitly considered in the projects described in the case studies, the assessment showed that the four approaches recommended by IPBES (**integrative, inclusive, informed, and adaptive**) were widely applied and could be a useful analytical framework for further planning and monitoring.

“WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP INDICATORS, INCLUDING ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL, AS WELL AS ON SUBSIDIES. WE CAN'T WAIT FOR THIS TO ARRIVE FROM ABROAD: PEOPLE ARE HERE, INSTITUTIONS ARE HERE, TALENTS ARE HERE. LET'S DO IT OURSELVES.”

- Hesiquio Benítez Díaz
CBD SBSTTA Chair

3. CROSS-CUTTING TAKEAWAYS FROM COP15 PRESENTATIONS

During a side event at CBD COP15, participants stressed several additional points to move forward. Among the key issues raised were financing, the necessity to align public budgets and the need to explore new tools for financing implementation.

Despite the fact that public budgets are one of the main instruments for governments to implement their plans, the lack of alignment of public funding with public policies on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are impeding the achievement of biodiversity goals.

Discussions stressed the necessity, especially in a post-COVID context, to look for new and more **innovative forms of financing** addressing in particular the issue of debt. One of these instruments may be debt-for-nature swaps^{6, 7}, due to their potential to address several issues in parallel. Furthermore the event's participants underlined the need to better identify projects that could benefit from funding and to enhance their design to improve their results.

On that note, several participants pointed out the importance of building up from the ground. Experiences suggest that developing projects with local communities can strengthen the community while improving their projects' outcomes. More effort is required to develop indicators that enable to reflect local realities and can help central governments support a better implementation on the ground.

Building from the discussion of the reports and the other cases presented by participants, including from Madagascar and Tunisia (both implemented in the context of the BIODEV 2030 project⁸), three cross-cutting takeaways were identified:

1. **Biodiversity pushes us further towards transforming governance.** Reforming global value chains and strengthening human rights on the ground must be dealt with simultaneously. In Latin America and the Caribbean, this could be addressed by securing the rights of people that participate in global value chains, especially in extractive activities that negatively impact biodiversity and ecosystems. The key question here is how to further support and strengthen actors that are actively working towards transformative change.
2. **Knowledge production plays a key role in supporting transformative change.** The LAC region has tremendous in-house expertise when it comes to developing broader instruments for sectors while integrating their interconnections (see further details below).
3. **The mutualization of expertise and knowledge in the LAC region and the strengthening of a collective learning between regions are essential.** Regional impulses are of utmost importance to implement the GBF. The regional level is crucial to gather knowledge and expertise on common issues, to organize inter-regional learning and to share experiences. It helps to inform on how to best deal with implementation challenges at local level and feeds into international and global discussions.

4. PATH FORWARD: SUPPORTING REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Because of the similarities in climate and biodiversity challenges faced by all regions, especially by developing countries, lessons learned from LAC can be useful to other regions. Through their regional experience, countries can strengthen local institutions, increase their collective intelligence on how to tackle global problems, share their experience and build partnerships to implement the Kunming-Montreal GBF.

When it comes to implementation, Latin America and the Caribbean has shown progress in building up the necessary resources in terms of institutions, expertise, sound data and policy frameworks to become proactive and lead a transformation from the current “business as usual” to a more cohesive approach. This change is crucial to multiply and scale-up initiatives such as those shown in the regional analysis. There are, however, important needs to be covered for an efficient implementation of the Kunming-Montreal GBF.

Indicators need to better reflect the cultural, social and economic dimensions of biodiversity in order to adequately assess the progress and evolution of biodiversity mainstreaming. Companies in the region could benefit from this data when they assess and disclose their impact and dependence on biodiversity (GBF Target 15). Instead of waiting for appropriate tools to be developed abroad, Latin America and the Caribbean could mobilize its expertise to develop instruments that could further strengthen the ties between biodiversity-related and non-related institutions in the region and help further develop its leadership for this topic.

ECLAC and its partners have already developed approaches to strengthen intra-regional cooperation. In addition to the different initiatives presented above, ECLAC and the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework-EU support project organized multi-stakeholder informal dialogues to support negotiators and experts from the LAC region during the COVID-19 pandemic in support of the GBF negotiation process. In collaboration with the Post-2020 Partnership⁹, ECLAC and the project continued to provide support to build neutral forums for regional multi-stakeholder dialogues and reflections. A report issued after the dialogues forms part of an Information Document made available by the CBD for OEWSG3¹⁰.

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ECLAC plans to scale up its efforts in promoting public awareness and communicating the Kunming-Montreal GBF through strategic partnerships with its current partners and other key state and non-state actors to positively accelerate impactful implementation on the ground and support regional capacity-building.

Key collaborations include the growing effort of all five UN Regional Commissions to align biodiversity targets into their portfolios, supporting transformative change within societies, economies and institutions, enhancing regional coordination and technical support on biodiversity mainstreaming and strengthening capacities of State members to mobilize investments for a rapid implementation of the GBF. This initiative will also support statistical development, promotion of rights-based approaches, and conducting dialogues, experience sharing and inter-regional coordination on biodiversity-related challenges¹¹.

“WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? THAT PRACTICE IS BETTER THAN A THOUSAND WORDS. FOR THIS WE NEED RESPECT, NEGOTIATION, INFORMATION AND CREATIVITY. WE NEED ONE LAST PIECE TO COMPLETE THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK, AND THAT LAST PIECE IS COMMUNITIES.”

- Vivienne Solís Rivera
Associate & Technical Coordinator COOPESOLIDAR¹²



Picture 1: Working in the aromatic plants garden, Women and Environment project, Querétaro, Mexico © Archive Women and Environment

Picture 2: Cacao fruit harvest © Pixabay on Pexels

⁹ The Coalition was part of the IUCN 2021 Congress. To have more information and its mission and composition see <https://post2020partnership.com/>

¹⁰ See the report of the Informal Multi-stakeholder Dialogues on the Post-2020 global biodiversity framework for Latin America and the Caribbean. 10 & 12 August 2021. <https://cutt.ly/A3TLZpa>

¹¹ On December 15, 2022, the five UN regional Commissions (ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, and UNECE) with the support of the Post 2020-EU support project, organized a side event at COP15 in Montreal, Canada, where they presented a joint statement to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework across their regions. You can find the highlights here <https://cutt.ly/p3UOpoo> and the recording at <https://cutt.ly/k3TL5yP>

¹² For more information on the cooperative Coopesolidar visit: <https://coopesolidar.org/actividades/proyectos/vigentes/somosiared/UNECE/> with the support of the Post 2020-EU support project,

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