



Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition • FSN Forum

TOPIC NOTE

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[↗ www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/biodiversity-mainstreaming](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/biodiversity-mainstreaming)

Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for improved Food Security and better Nutrition

This online discussion will contribute to define further the objectives and partnerships of the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform and to advance the development of its work programme.

In 2017, FAO Members welcomed the FAO's initiative to act as Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform and requested the Organization to facilitate, in collaboration with its partners, the integration of actions for the conservation, sustainable use, management and restoration of biological diversity across agricultural sectors at national, regional and international levels¹.

Being global in scope, the Platform aims to improve cross-sectoral coordination of policies and practices to mainstream biodiversity by a wide range of stakeholders. The ultimate goal of the Platform is to promote and facilitate the adoption of good practices across all agricultural sectors that will support the conservation and sustainable use and management of biodiversity and increase the productivity, stability and resilience of production systems in an integrated approach.

Biodiversity and mainstreaming

Biodiversity, or biological diversity, stands for the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

Biodiversity and ecosystem services are essential in supporting agriculture in multiples ways and at all levels. These interlinkages are increasingly seen as key for livelihoods, welfare, production and development. The Global Environmental Facility Scientific and Advisory Panel has defined mainstreaming biodiversity as “the process of embedding biodiversity considerations into policies, strategies and practices of key public and private actors that impact or rely on biodiversity, so that it is conserved and sustainably and equitably used both locally and globally”. The same document notes that mainstreaming is a long-term process, a social experiment in changing the value structures of

¹ C 2017/33

institutions and individuals with vital consequences for the natural world and the humans who rely on it. Good governance and strong institutions are key determinants of success.

The first major activity of the Biodiversity Platform will be the organization, by the FAO and the Convention on Biological Diversity, of the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors (29-31 May 2018 – Rome, Italy).

In the weeks leading up to this meeting, we would like to invite you to help us identify areas of joint action in developing integrated approaches for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Such approaches should aim at reducing the ecological footprint of agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and at the same time, they should allow for an increased production to meet the growing demand for nutritious, healthy food.

As we know, while biodiversity and ecosystem services are critical to agricultural sectors, including crop and livestock agriculture, forest, fisheries and aquaculture sectors, these are also major drivers of environmental change with significant impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services. One main impact on biodiversity loss derives from the conversion of natural or semi-natural land into agricultural land uses, followed by the introduction of invasive alien species, including pests and diseases. At the same time, sustainable agriculture practices can contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, habitats and ecosystem services provision

We would therefore be grateful if you could share your insights and examples on any of the following questions. For your information, please also refer to the instruments, guidelines, tools and technical materials developed by FAO and made available in the background documents section.

1) Biodiversity is an important contributor to food security and improved nutrition. **Could you share examples/activities in your work where**

- **biodiversity is contributing in achieving food security and improved nutrition?**
- **the overuse of biodiversity compromise food security and nutrition?**

2) All agricultural sectors (crop and livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) rely on biodiversity and on the ecosystem functions and services, they underpin. At the same time, these sectors may affect biodiversity through various direct and indirect drivers. **Could you share examples/activities in your work**

- **where a (sustainable) production system played a key role for the conservation of the biodiversity surrounding it?** Please provide detailed information you may have or know of and identify the agricultural sector.
- **where a(n) (unsustainable) production system played a key role for the degradation of the biodiversity surrounding it?** Please provide detailed information you may have or know of and identify the agricultural sector.

3) Good governance, enabling frameworks, and stewardship initiatives are needed to facilitate mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across agricultural sectors.

- **Do you have any examples of such enabling factors and initiatives or the lack of it?** Examples could include Cross-sectoral land use planning; Macro-economic policy and public investment; Elimination, phasing out and reform of perverse incentives harmful to biodiversity; Product labelling and market certification schemes; Green finance and private investment or others
- **Which partners need to be involved in institutional frameworks, policies and processes for biodiversity mainstreaming to strengthen them?**

4) The importance of biodiversity for improved food security and better nutrition is not always evident to those engaged in agricultural sectors.

- **What needs to be done to increase awareness of farmers, livestock keepers, fisher folks and foresters, their organizations and the industry of the relevance of biodiversity and ecosystem services for the food and agriculture production in their sector?**
- **How can the technical and institutional capacity needed to promote sustainable agriculture and reduce the impact on biodiversity be developed?**

We thank you very much for your inputs and look forward to an engaging exchange.

Yours

Irene Hoffmann
Secretary
Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
FAO

and

Paulo Augusto Lourenco Dias Nunes
Natural Resources Officer
Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water Department
FAO

Background information

FAO has a longstanding history of collaborating with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as evidenced by a number of decisions and joint work programmes adopted or endorsed by the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) and FAO's Governing and Statutory Bodies. The UN Biodiversity Conference, held in December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico, reiterated its invitation to governments to use FAO's guidance related to biodiversity and agriculture, fisheries, and forestry².

In addition, the Conference resulted in significant commitments for action on biodiversity to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. Through the *Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-Being*³, ministers and other heads of delegation have committed to work at all levels within their governments and across all sectors to mainstream biodiversity through multiple actions.

Biodiversity and Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has placed biodiversity at the centre of many development activities, particularly those related to sustainable agriculture sectors. It calls for the integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies. In addition, the Agenda calls for the promotion of fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and appropriate access to such resources. Successful biodiversity mainstreaming should contribute to achieving the SDG targets 14, 15 and 2, and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets⁴, many of which are currently far from being achieved within their 2020 deadlines.

SDG 2 aims to *end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*. With its different targets, SDG 2 exemplifies a key feature of the 2030 Agenda that stresses the inter-relatedness and interdependence of many SDGs and their targets. Effective elimination of food insecurity and malnutrition depends on the sustainability of the agricultural sectors. Progress towards SDG 2 will depend on progress made towards several of the other SDGs, including, among others, the eradication of poverty and the response to climate change. In order to achieve progress on SDG 2, policy-makers and stakeholders will need to address such critical interactions and inter-linkages, in terms of both synergies and trade-offs, among the different SDG 2 targets and between SDG 2 and other SDGs. For example, SDG 14, which aims to *conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources* and SDG 15, aiming to *protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss*. Biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors should contribute significantly to the achievement of SDGs 2, 14 and 15, and the 2030 Agenda, as a whole.

The CBD COP, in its COP Decision XIII/3, welcomed the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform launched by FAO to build bridges between sectors, identify synergies, align goals and develop

² CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/3, paragraph 5

³ Cancun Declaration accessible here: <https://www.cbd.int/cop/cop-13/hls/cancun%20declaration-en.pdf>

⁴ There are 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, defined under five Strategic Goals: <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>

integrated cross-sectoral approaches to mainstream biodiversity in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, and invited FAO and its Governing and Statutory Bodies to consider and support the development and implementation of measures, guidance and tools to promote this. The outcome of the CBD COP 13 was brought to the attention of the 40th Session of FAO Conference⁵.

The Platform has the objective of mainstreaming biodiversity through

- facilitating dialogue among governments, communities of practice and other stakeholders on concrete and coordinated steps to mainstream biodiversity across the agricultural sectors;
- facilitating the exchange of information and data on biodiversity and biodiversity friendly agricultural practices and policies among stakeholders.
- translating knowledge into policy-related actionable recommendations for consideration by FAO's Governing and Statutory Bodies.

The Platform could in the mid- to longer term develop activities, such as:

- a) Identify policy gaps and governance challenges related to biodiversity in all relevant sectors;
- b) Contribute to the achievement of the relevant SDGs and Aichi Biodiversity Targets within the framework of Agenda 2030;
- c) Identify and promote existing governance mechanisms and policy initiatives that effectively mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within and across agricultural sectors;
- d) Strengthen bridging processes, at national, regional and international levels to allow the agricultural sectors to learn from each other and from the environment sector, identifying synergies and aligning goals;
- e) Coordinate biodiversity mainstreaming with efforts to conserve and sustainably use genetic resources for food and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of their use; and
- f) Lead and coordinate UN system efforts on biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors.

⁵ C 2017/33

Background documents

Sustainable agriculture for biodiversity - biodiversity for sustainable agriculture

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6602e.pdf>

COP Decision XIII/3

<https://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop/?m=cop-13>

Outcome of the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity: Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-mt376e.pdf>

Mainstreaming biodiversity in practice

http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/Mainstreaming-Biodiversity-LowRes_1.pdf

The state of the world's biodiversity for food and agriculture

<http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/biodiversity/sowbfa/en>

Review of the State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture

<http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/cgrfa-home/en>

Mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into agricultural production and management in East Africa

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5603e.pdf>

Mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into agricultural production and management in the Pacific Islands

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6505e.pdf>

Biodiversity and ecosystem services website

<http://www.fao.org/ecosystem-services-biodiversity/en>