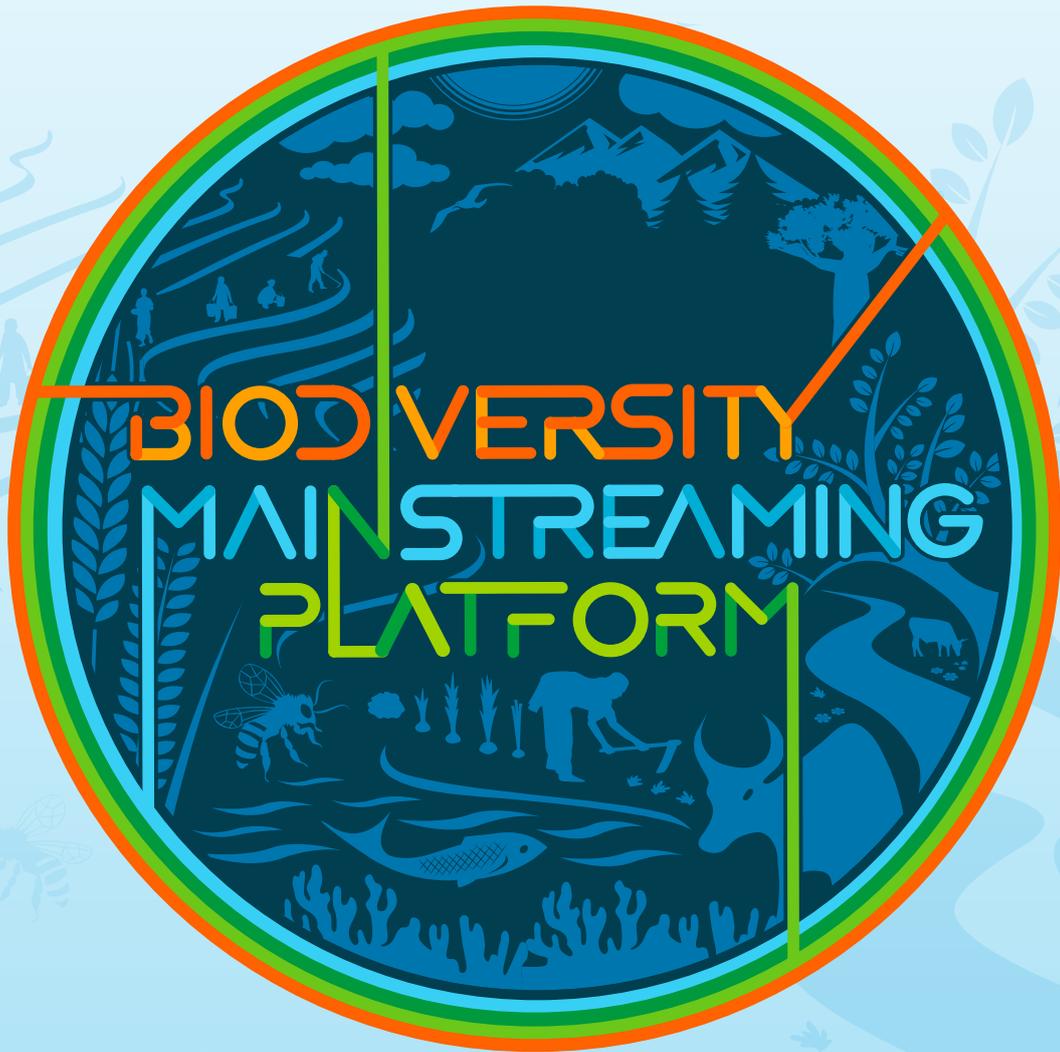




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



FAO Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform

Biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors - it's important

Biological diversity is the variability that exists among all living organisms on land, in fresh water bodies and in the oceans. It also includes the ecological complexes in which these organisms interact. Biological diversity encompasses the diversity within species, the diversity between species and the diversity of ecosystems.

Biodiversity for food and agriculture is the biological diversity that is needed to sustain food and agriculture production. It encompasses all the components of biological diversity that make up agricultural ecosystems. These components include the variety and variability of animals, plants and micro-organisms. This biodiversity, which exists within species among species and among ecosystems, is necessary to sustain the key functions, the structure and the processes of agricultural ecosystems.

Biodiversity mainstreaming across the agricultural sectors is the process of embedding biodiversity considerations into all policies, strategies and practices that are adopted by public and private actors who either depend on biodiversity or whose actions have an impact on biodiversity. The purpose of mainstreaming biodiversity in the agriculture sectors is to ensure that biodiversity is conserved and used sustainably.

Biodiversity is integral to ecosystem health, essential to sustainably increasing food production and necessary to building resilient livelihoods. Taken as a whole, the agricultural sectors manage the largest areas of land, fresh water and oceans on the planet.

Biodiversity is the basis of **agriculture**. It is the source of all crops and domesticated livestock and the variety that exists among them. Agricultural ecosystems carry out essential functions, such as nutrient cycling, the decomposition of organic matter, soil formation and rehabilitation, water purification, pest and disease regulation, and pollination that benefit crop and livestock production. These ecosystem functions are critical to sustaining food production, safeguarding nutrition and health, and ultimately protecting human well-being.

Fisheries and aquaculture depend on the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems to sustain themselves over the long term. Biodiversity is crucial for wild fisheries. Mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries policies, programmes and plans is critical for maintaining the habitats that provide the essential feeding, spawning and nursery sites for wild fish populations.

Forests contain most of the world's terrestrial biodiversity. Forest biodiversity includes all forms of life found within forested areas and the ecological roles these forest organisms play. Prospects for sustainable development will be largely influenced by the state of diversity of forest ecosystems and species. Forest ecosystems deliver a range of benefits that extend far beyond the provision of the essential forest goods that people rely on. Forest ecosystem services are of particular importance for poor and vulnerable communities. For many people, forest ecosystems are a critical part of the foundation of their cultural identity, spiritual beliefs and worldview.

For all these reasons, biodiversity is an important factor in global efforts to achieve food security and improve nutrition.

Farming, fisheries and forestry rely on biodiversity and the ecosystem functions and services that biodiversity supports. However, through various direct and indirect drivers, these sectors also have an impact on biodiversity. These impacts may in turn affect the agricultural sectors, and potentially undermine food security and nutrition, and the delivery of ecosystem functions and services.





At the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP13) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which was held in December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico, the Parties called for the mainstreaming of biodiversity across all agricultural sectors. At COP13, the High-Level Segment adopted the Cancun Declaration, which calls for the mainstreaming of biodiversity across all policies, plans and programmes, and invites all the different actors and sectors working in this area, particularly FAO, to cooperate closely. The key message of the meeting was that the environment sector and the agriculture sectors must work together to achieve the twin goals of conserving biodiversity and eliminating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

The Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform

In late 2016, FAO offered to act as the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform (the Platform). The FAO Conference welcomed this initiative and requested the Organization to facilitate the integration of national, regional and international actions to support the conservation, sustainable use, management and restoration of biological diversity across the agricultural sectors. The work is to be done in a structured and coherent manner and in collaboration with FAO partners, including the CBD and other United Nations organizations.

The Platform responds to the need to build bridges between the agricultural sectors and the environmental sector. It works to identify the synergies and align the goals between these sectors, and develop integrated approaches to mainstreaming biodiversity into agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture. The Platform will mainstream biodiversity by:

- fostering dialogue among governments, communities of practice and other stakeholders;
- facilitating the exchange of information and data on biodiversity and biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices and policies among stakeholders; and
- translating knowledge on biodiversity into policy-related communication materials for consideration by FAO Governing and Statutory Bodies.

Fostering dialogue between the environment sector and the agricultural sectors

In May 2018, FAO co-organized with the CBD Secretariat the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across the Agricultural Sectors. The Dialogue, which was held in Rome, brought together about 250 Ministers, policy makers, experts, and representatives from inter-governmental organizations, private groups and civil society.

In separate working groups, participants at the Dialogue considered biodiversity mainstreaming in the context of (1) global governance; (2) national policies and legislation; (3) incentives and investment; and (4) voluntary certification schemes. The joint report of the co-chairs of the working groups provides a number of suggestions, including:

- embrace a systemic approach with the Rio conventions, reinforce synergies and use the SDGs to develop links among diverse initiatives and unify their implementation goals;
- prepare, by 2020 at the latest, in collaboration with partners and stakeholders, a Biodiversity Strategy setting out future activities;
- capitalize on the role FAO plays as a neutral forum for policy dialogue, the Organization's convening and facilitation power at different levels, and its technical support and knowledge management functions;
- facilitate the sharing of information, including case studies and communities of practice on valuation, and policies and legislation; and promote learning among farmers, stakeholders and decision makers in ways that acknowledge the value of local and indigenous knowledge in using and preserving biodiversity;

- collect data and develop metrics and indicators to measure the impact and performance of actions undertaken to foster the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, with the active involvement of research institutions and other stakeholders, such as consumer groups and suppliers.

On 29-30 October 2018, the Government of Mexico, in collaboration with FAO regional and country offices, will host the first Regional Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Latin America and the Caribbean. Additional regional dialogues are planned for Africa, Europe and Asia in 2019.

Developing a biodiversity strategy for FAO

The outcomes of the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across the Agricultural Sectors were presented to several FAO Governing Bodies in 2018: the Committees on Fisheries, on Forestry, on Commodity Problems and on Agriculture. FAO is now in the process of preparing a draft biodiversity strategy for consideration by the 41st Session of the FAO Conference in June 2019.

Shaping the global agenda on biodiversity

In 2020, the COP of the CBD is expected to consider the adoption of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform, in consultation with the FAO regional conferences and FAO Governing Bodies, will make an important contribution to the process of developing this framework.



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