

EMG Issue Management Group on Biodiversity
UN Common Approach to Biodiversity: Webinar Series

Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Agrifood Systems Webinar

Outcome Document

The [United Nations Common Approach to Biodiversity](#) (Common Approach) webinar series continued on Tuesday 4 June 2024, with the second webinar titled “Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Agrifood Systems”. Hosted by the [United Nations Environment Management Group](#) (EMG), the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#) (FAO), and the [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#) (IFAD), this interactive webinar convened experts at global and national levels to present the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity across agrifood sectors. The webinar provided the opportunity to highlight the role the agrifood sectors play in implementing the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (GBF), and to identify opportunities to guarantee the participation of all actors across agrifood sectors in its implementation.

In addition, the webinar offered a platform to promote awareness and implementation of the Common Approach in the UN system and foster interagency collaboration. The presenters were able to share best practices, lessons learned, and cases of concrete actions that integrate biodiversity considerations in agrifood sectors.

Event rundown and key messages:

After the opening remarks by Mr. Hossein Fadaei (EMG), a setting the scene presentation was provided by Mr. James Lomax (UNEP) and Ms. Katherine Madden (NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, UNEP). An overview of how the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is supporting the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat and Member States to implement the GBF was provided by Mr. James Lomax, highlighting UNEP’s role in terms of:

- Political engagement and support to CBD Secretariat
- Galvanize collective action in UN system to implement the Common Approach
- Support Member States to implement the GBF

In support of the GBF, UNEP operates through advocacy and engagement to generate political momentum and resources for implementation, capacity building, increasing transparency, and accountability; and enhance cooperation and synergies to ensure the whole-of-government, society and UN approach. Mr. Lomax summarized the importance of agrifood systems as a solution and strategic entry point to better support member countries to implement the Biodiversity Plan and achieving global targets while addressing the triple planetary crisis. Alongside, recognizing the value of food systems to support a wide range of GBF targets and highlighting the value of their integration within UN policies and programmes.

Ms. Katherine Madden, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) Accelerator Partnership, UNEP, gave a brief synopsis of the initiatives and integrated approaches that UNEP are taking, in collaboration with other UN entities such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and CBD, to support Member States to implement the GBF, including providing financial and technical support to Global Environment Facility (GEF) eligible parties, the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, and the National Monitoring Support Initiative.

Ms. Madden gave a brief overview of the NBSAP Accelerator Partnershipⁱ, a country-led partnership with a coordination function to accelerate the implementation of NBSAPs aligned with the GBF, by raising ambition and increasing action for biodiversity. The Partnership is supported by national governments, under the co-chairing of Colombia and Germany. The operationalizing and implementation work is managed by UNDP and UNEP, with the support of CBD. The partnership is currently formed of 40 country members, 3 regional members and 30 institutional partners who are able to access the tools, guidance and support. The partnership supports parties through four main work programme areas:

- Knowledge, supporting dialogue, outreach and knowledge exchange opportunities (e.g.: Rapid Capacity Needs Assessment)
- In-country support, providing technical assistance on NBSAP provision measurement and whole of society approaches.
- Advocacy, elevating political importance of NBSAPs both nationally and internationally, and fostering synergies between climate, biodiversity and land restoration activities.
- Match-making facilitation programs, which matches country demand with technical, financial or knowledge support.

Mr. Frederic Castell presented FAO's work on mainstreaming biodiversity across agrifood sectors at global, regional and national levels. FAO's work entails providing a neutral and open forum where biodiversity-related policies are discussed, and agreements are negotiated between Members, as well as developing biodiversity instruments and mechanisms. The organization hosts many biodiversity mechanisms and instruments, and directly supports 130 countries in implementing a broad range of projects and programmes.

FAO's work is guided by their Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity Across Agricultural Sectors, which is organized around four outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Support provided to Members, at their request, to enhance their capacity to mainstream biodiversity
- Outcome 2: Biodiversity mainstreamed across FAO's policies, programmes and activities

- Outcome 3: Role of biodiversity and its ecosystem services for food security and nutrition globally recognized
- Outcome 4: Coordination and delivery of FAO's work on biodiversity strengthened

The Strategy is supported by a 2024-27 Action Plan that is fully aligned with the GBF, including the provision of technical and policy support on GBF targets, and support to countries implementing and monitoring of NBSAPsⁱⁱ.

In addition, FAO has developed a Biodiversity Knowledge Hub, which provides access to biodiversity related resources developed by FAO to strengthen countries capacity to mainstream values in agricultural sectors, including a wide range of resources for the different GBF targetsⁱⁱⁱ. Moreover, the Organization supports the implementation of the GBF through:

- Planning: Technical and policy support for integration of agrifood sectors in NBSAPs. Development of guidelines.
- Implementation: Access to finance (i.e.: support GBF Fund submissions), action at the regional and country levels, knowledge and advocacy.
- Monitoring: FAO is the custodian of 25+ indicators in the GBF Monitoring Framework as well as responsible for developing new indicators (e.g.: restoration, pesticides, etc.).

Ms. Marie-Aude Even, IFAD, provided a brief overview of IFAD's work mainstreaming biodiversity in agrifood systems, with a special focus on a whole of society approach and the role and gaps in farmers and food system actors in participation.

Ms. Even presented IFAD's Biodiversity Strategy 2022 – 2025^{iv}, its three main goals and four areas of work:

1. Integration biodiversity in programs and projects
2. Investing in learning and knowledge
3. Testing and demonstrating innovations for biodiversity
4. Strengthening partnerships

The Organization has developed relevant actions and tools, such as the inclusion of biodiversity in safeguards framework, a biodiversity finance tracking tool, a Community of Practice and knowledge management platform to foster exchange, partnerships, etc.

The link between IFAD's agenda and portfolio on nature (i.e.: climate change, resilience, natural resource management, water, etc.) and people agenda (i.e.: income, health, nutrition, etc.) was highlighted, in particular the need to ensure that people implementing biodiversity action benefit from this, in order to maintain such actions and practices in the long run.

IFAD recognizes the importance of adopting a whole of society approach and the key role of farmers in agro-ecological transitions and agro-biodiversity transitions. IFAD noticed that farmers and agriculture are often underrepresented, resulting in less finance for food systems, reforms that do not necessarily address farmers' needs, etc.

Ms. Even shared the results of a survey implemented in February 2024 with farmer organization platforms, concluding that most farmers were not familiar with the GBF, but willing to contribute, engage and support its implementation.

Bringing and financing farmers and value chains is considered crucial for the achievement of the GBF, as well as the role of UNCTs and UN agencies for their inclusion in NBSAPs/NDCs, evidence and capacity development, supporting partnerships and synergies between financing institutions, etc.

Mr. Robert Steele presented the work taking place in Indonesia aimed at building an Integrated UN System Strategy for Biodiversity through the UN Common Approach to Biodiversity, in light of Indonesia's biodiversity richness and rising threats (i.e.: habitat degradation and fragmentation, illegal wildlife trade, climate change impacts, etc.)

Mr. Steele reinforced the need to protect nature by adopting an "Integrated Systems Approach", considering that nature, biodiversity, and ecosystem functions and services form the foundation of everything on the planet.

Moreover, Mr. Steele expressed that nature has an economic value, and that biodiversity is the basis of much of human wellbeing and economic activity.

In this context, UN in Indonesia is currently developing a Common Approach to Biodiversity, in consideration of ongoing efforts such as the new Common Country Analysis (CCA) for the next UNSDCF (2026 – 2030) and other national actions (i.e.: consultation phase of the new NBSAP, National Medium and Long-term Development plan, priorities for the new Government, etc.).

Mr. Steele highlighted the convergence of catalysts and enablers for prioritizing biodiversity, including the GBF, the Common Approach, SDG High impact initiatives ("*Nature Driving Economic Transformation*"), IBSAP, Blue Economy Roadmap, CCAs, etc. In addition, he reminded the audience of the relevance of GBF targets to sustainable food systems, in addition to opportunities for cross fertilization and integration between NBSAP and national pathways for Sustainable Agrifood Systems, One Health-related plans and strategies.

As a work in progress, UNCT Indonesia plans to leverage existing partnerships in the development and implementation of its Common Approach, such as the National Blue Agenda Actions Partnership^v. In addition, the team has identified touch points within the UN system, linking biodiversity to areas such as; climate, **agriculture**, energy transitions, One Health, Women's empowerment and engagement, finance, labour, human rights, and pollution. Some challenges have also been identified, including insufficient funding, human resources capacity, lack of quality data, among others.

Early thinking around this ongoing process entails demonstrating biodiversity value and multiple benefits, strengthening UN unity on biodiversity and capitalizing expertise, strengthening multilateral partnership platforms, promoting national and international leadership, leveraging international financial instruments, promote biodiversity advocacy; and leverage UN strength for biodiversity monitoring, managing, reporting and sharing.

Main Takeaways:

Agrifood sectors are key in achieving biodiversity and GBF targets, as well as overall environmental sustainability:

- Global agrifood sectors are a significant driver of and, critically, a key solution to the triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution. This is clear and if we do not invest in

sustainable food systems, then we are seriously putting our environmental health and planetary health in jeopardy.

- Agrifood sectors are a real strategic entry point to better support the GBF and also bring many MEAs as together so that we can start to bring unifying and integrated approaches.
- Most GBF targets are directly related to agrifood sectors, which reflects the importance of such sectors for the Framework. A lot of emphasis is on conservation measures in protected areas (i.e.: GBF Target 3: *Protected and conserved areas*); however, there is a need to also focus on non-protected areas which are mostly agrifood areas.

Identifying connections and combining efforts at all levels and across MEAs:

- Combine the efforts that across the MEAs to really start to use the political momentum we have on food systems to very much achieve environmental goals.
- The UN system can focus on unifying these cross-cutting issues within agrifood sectors, for example at country level, so the system can provide a far more integrated approach to support Member States. Several entry points linked to agrifood sectors have been identified, including soil health, health and nutrition, water resources, human rights, among others.

Recognizing the intersections between biodiversity and people:

- The intersection between nature and people, farmers in particular, needs to be recognized and emphasized. In particular, the UN system shall focus on:
 - ✓ Build capacities and awareness (i.e.: GBF and NBSAP training sessions)
 - ✓ Build evidence on the role of farmers
 - ✓ Support participation and dialogue during COPs, NBSAPs, financing processes, etc.
 - ✓ Leverage partnerships with Global Biodiversity Youth Networks, IP, NGOs, research institutions, etc.
- The whole of society approach was emphasized during all presentations, with a focus on the rural poor and impoverished communities.

Financing:

- Develop and enhance partnerships and synergies between financing institutions with different farmer organizations and other relevant groups, as well as innovative financing mechanisms for local communities (i.e.: GBFF).

Conclusions:

- Agrifood sectors are key to achieving biodiversity and GBF targets, offering a wide range of entry points for developing integrated solutions that can address different challenges and the triple planetary crisis.
- The intersection between nature and people, farmers in particular, needs to be recognized and emphasized at all levels.

Bringing and financing farmers, under a whole of a society approach, is crucial for the achievement of the GBF and related targets. The UN system is well placed to promote their participation in key processes, such as NBSAPs and NDCs, promoting capacity development, and access to finance.

The EMG is also well positioned and will continue to provide new opportunities for exchange and dialogue, with the participation of different UN entities and stakeholders.

- The ongoing process in Indonesia, aimed at building an Integrated UN System Strategy for Biodiversity through the UN Common Approach to Biodiversity, serves as an important example that can be considered in other countries and regions across the globe, not only for enhancing coordination among UN agencies but also with the potential of influencing key policies at national level that cover and integrate biodiversity.

Credits:

The EMG, FAO and IFAD would like to thank the speakers and organizations for their valuable time and contributions to the webinar.

Moderator:

- **Marcos Gibson** - Environmental and Climate Change Coordinator, Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences

Presenters:

- **James Lomax** – Food Systems and Agriculture Programme Manager, UNEP
- **Katherine Madden** - Global Coordinator, NBSAP Accelerator Partnership
- **Frédéric Castell** - Senior Natural Resources Officer, FAO
- **Marie-Aude Even** - Global Senior Biodiversity Specialist, IFAD
- **Robert Steele** - UNEP Indonesia Integrated Biodiversity Strategy Advisor

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Webinar Series Objectives:

- Promote and support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Promote the implementation of the Common Approach to Biodiversity.
- Support Member States in developing NBSAPs.
- Highlight biodiversity-related activities within the UN System.
- Promote the integration of biodiversity considerations into UN policies and programmes.
- Facilitate information sharing between UN organizations.
- Highlight case studies and lessons learned.
- Raise awareness of systematic challenges around biodiversity.

UN Common Approach to Biodiversity:

In May 2021, the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) endorsed the “[Common Approach to Integrating Biodiversity and Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Development into United Nations Policy and Programme Planning and Delivery](#)” (Common Approach).

Through the Common Approach, the United Nations system expresses a shared recognition of the urgency of acting and a commitment to mainstreaming biodiversity and nature-based solutions through collective action [Insert Upcoming Events](#)

EMG Issue Management Group on Biodiversity:

Established in 2021, the [IMG on Biodiversity](#) facilitates and enables a streamlined approach to implementing the Common Approach. One of the key activities under the IMG is to raise awareness and share knowledge on the Common Approach by stimulating interagency dialogue and cooperation.

ⁱ [Home - NBSAP Accelerator Partnership](#)

ⁱⁱ [Strategy and Action Plan \(fao.org\)](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Knowledge Hub \(fao.org\)](#)

^{iv} <https://www.ifad.org/de/-/estrategia-de-biodiversidad-del-fida>

^v <https://www.nbaap.id/>