

Mainstreaming and innovative Governance of Biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean: Challenges and opportunities for Sustainability in developing planning and Agriculture

Virtual dialogue report – Public sector
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1. Background

Achieving environmental commitments requires structural changes in our economies, especially in production methods and development planning. (Harris et al., 2023). The current dominant way of producing food is unsustainable, contributing up to a third of greenhouse gas emissions, causing up to 80% of biodiversity loss, and using up to 70% of fresh water (UNSDG, 2023); additionally, the constant demand for more food products without environmentally and socially responsible production leads to the expansion of cultivated areas, increased use of agrochemicals, overexploitation of water, increased soil erosion, reduced pollinators and other native species, fragmentation and reduction of ecosystems, among other loss and degradation processes (IPBES, 2019; SCDB, 2022; FAO, 2020; Yamaguchi et al., 2021). This is of vital importance in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), which is one of the regions with the highest biodiversity in the world and home to megadiverse countries such as Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. However, LAC also has some of the highest inequalities and social exclusion globally (ECLAC, 2022). These asymmetries within each country must be corrected to improve the quality of life of the population and to build more cohesive societies, preventing socioeconomic, political, and institutional fractures. In this context, ILPES and ECLAC propose a framework for the design, implementation, and evaluation of planning and public policies based on four axes: intersectorality, multi-stakeholder participation, coordination between levels of government, and intertemporality (Martínez, González, and Williner, 2023).

Likewise, the new Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) is also committed to achieving transformative changes in society by realigning the three dimensions of sustainable development. Therefore, strategic integration and governance approaches for transformative change in favor of biodiversity are necessary to achieve the long-term targets adopted by countries in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF). It is also necessary to propose solutions based on intersectoral, multi-level, and multi-scale reasoning to achieve the implementation of biodiversity integration with integrative, inclusive, informed, and adaptive governance. We are at a crucial moment for joint action by the whole of society, for which it is important to open neutral spaces for dialogue and debate among multiple actors.

2. Objectives

The organization of the three regional virtual dialogues with social actors (indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth, academia), private sector actors (companies of different sizes, cooperatives, financial sector actors), academia; national and subnational governments, and technical-scientific advisors from governments addressed the mainstreaming and innovative governance of biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean. The aim was to promote the coherent and systemic changes necessary to advance sustainable development in the region, strengthening its three dimensions.

2.1 Specific objectives

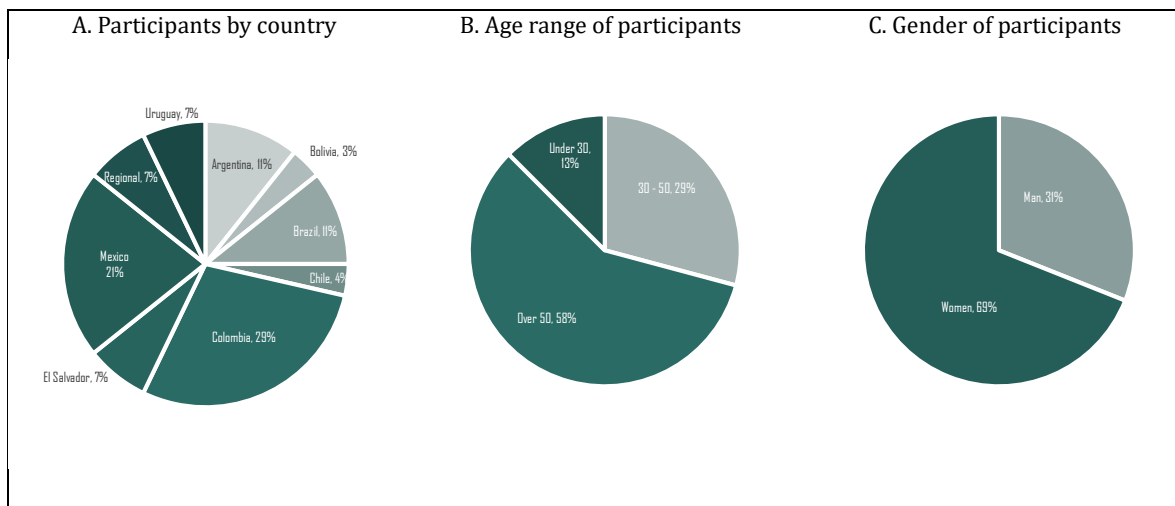
- Engage new actors in the discussion and reflection process, creating an informal and neutral space for dialogue on the transformative changes and just transitions needed to reintegrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Reflect on and debate how the KM-GBF can contribute to the promotion of sustainable food systems, considering the strengths and weaknesses of the region and the key factors as well as key factors for promoting coherent and systemic changes.
- Enhance the catalytic role of development planning from the governance framework, policies and monitoring for the implementation of instruments and/or actions that drive the transformative changes proposed by the KM-GBF.
- Identify and debate the main challenges, needs, best practices and opportunities for broad multi-actor early implementation of the KM-GBF, including biodiversity mainstreaming and innovative governance as tools for sustainable management of terrestrial and marine resources.
- Collect and generate key data and information for the development of future tools on biodiversity mainstreaming in development policies and innovative governance, promoting a regional vision on key issues and processes for the implementation of the KM-GBF under a "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-society" approach.

3. Participants

The informal virtual dialogue on " Mainstreaming and innovative Governance of Biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean: Challenges and opportunities for Sustainability in developing planning and Agriculture ", took place on Friday, July 7th, 2023. It involved 29 participants from 8 countries in the region, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, and Uruguay. These participants represented various regional (LAC) institutions within the public sectors of agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and finance. Additionally, experts in agriculture, fisheries, planning, and governance also took part, providing a regionally representative but limited perspective from the Caribbean and Anglophone regions, this gathering addressed the viewpoints and needs of public sector actors in the region. Of the participants, 29% were between the ages of 30-50, 58% were over 50, and 13% were under 30 (see Figure 1). This diverse age range facilitated intergenerational discussions and allowed for different perspectives to be considered. In terms of gender, 69% of the participants were women, and 31% were men. The higher representation of women could indicate increased female

participation in biodiversity management topics and recognition of the importance of including women in these discussions.

Figure 1. Information of the participants of the virtual dialogue



4. Results of the preliminary questionnaire

In order to gather the participants' reflections on the topics to be discussed during the dialogue, a brief questionnaire was conducted to assess the actors' knowledge and their specific participation in biodiversity integration initiatives and in biodiversity management from a participative, informed, adaptive, and integrated governance perspective. A high percentage (46%) of the participants are aware of what mainstreaming biodiversity means, and 50% not only understand the concept but also participate in related initiatives. Regarding governance, many actors (50%) know what participative biodiversity management means, and 42% participate in initiatives related to the promotion of improved governance mechanisms. Lastly, regarding the KM-GBF, 67% of the actors are familiar with the framework. These results suggest that there is a significant degree of knowledge and awareness in the region regarding biodiversity and biodiversity governance topics. This is positive for addressing environmental and sustainability challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as for fulfilling the international commitments of the KM-GBF. The results are shown in Figure 2.

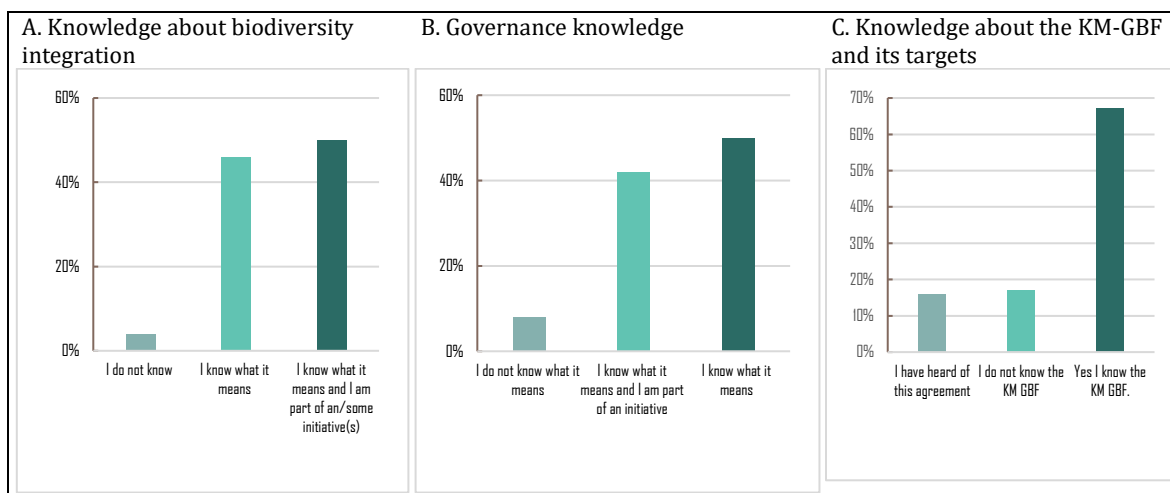
Next, the mainstreaming biodiversity and management initiatives communicated by the respondents include:

- The Environmental Education and Citizen Participation Program of EPA BARRANQUILLA VERDE directly contributes to communities through

workshops, training, environmental routes, and tours to discuss the ecosystemic importance, flora, and fauna of the Barranquilla district.

- Abema Technical Chamber on Biodiversity.
- National Association of State Environmental Authorities - Biodiversity Technical Working Group.
- Strategies for integrating biodiversity into productive sectors in Hidalgo, Jalisco, and Baja California Sur.
- Biodivercities Project in Colombia.
- The Latin American Scientific Society of Agroecology (SOCLA) conducts research activities, capacity building, and promotes agroecology in ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation processes through agriculture and food system management.
- Mangrove Life Program; Sustainable Landscapes Project of the Herencia Colombia program; GEF-IDB Project for the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of the Ramsar site Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta.
- Human Rights in Biodiversity Group, where we work on the analysis, promotion, and advocacy for the integration of human rights into the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Figure 2. Preliminary questionnaire results



5. Results of the round of discussions

5.1 First round of discussions: The new global biodiversity framework and its link with the agriculture sector

5.1.1 KM-GBF targets of the agriculture sector

The first question of the dialogues was posed with the target of gathering information on the importance of the KM-GBF targets in expediting the transition of the agriculture sector towards necessary sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean. The question posed was: What are the three most relevant KM-GBF targets to accelerate the transition of the agriculture sector towards sustainability? The results obtained were as follows (See Figure 3):

- The selected target with the highest potential for strengthening processes and public policies, driving the transition of the agriculture sector towards sustainability, is target 10, chosen by 21% of respondents. It received greater emphasis due to being selected for the necessary changes in the agriculture sector, and it has a direct relationship with the sector.
- In second place, with a selection rate of 14%, is target 1, integrated participatory spatial planning. This approach involves stakeholder participation in land planning and use, which is essential for promoting sustainable agricultural practices.
- Likewise, the third place was tied with the same number of votes for targets 13 and 18, each receiving 8% of the vote. Harmful incentives for biodiversity and capacity-building measures to achieve fair and equitable participation in the

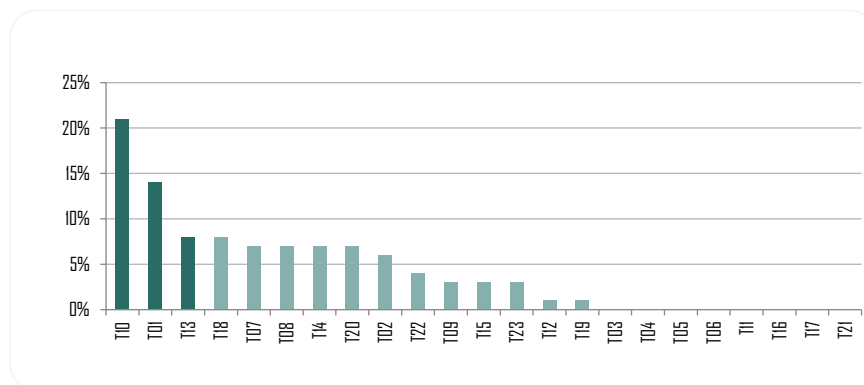
benefits derived from the use of genetic resources and digital information on genetic resource sequences are considered crucial for achieving a just transition towards agricultural sector sustainability.

Target 10, sustainable agriculture, is explicitly linked to accelerating the transition. Agriculture has the most significant potential to transform the landscape, and its connection with target 7, reducing the risks and impacts of all sources of pollution, represents the most significant externality of agriculture. Furthermore, IPBES has identified it as one of the primary activities responsible for biodiversity loss.

For target 1, the pressure of urban sprawl and agricultural areas on forest zones represents a complex problem. Hence, planning is seen as a priority to define different land uses, ensuring that agriculture doesn't exceed soil use capacity. Moreover, it's foundational to the framework with many implications. Mechanisms must be created for equitable discussions and to provide clarity on why certain areas are dedicated to agriculture and others to conservation. Nevertheless, territorial planning, a process carried out for several years, hasn't had a positive impact on territory conservation. Thus, an analysis is necessary to identify the incentives that promote biodiversity loss (target 18), directing and mobilizing resources to transform negative incentives into positive ones (target 19). Target 13 was chosen because it's crucial for the region to have a fair and equitable distribution. Many conflicts arise from unequal land management and ownership, creating limited opportunities for small farmers and keeping them in poverty.

The challenge lies in determining how the framework can be effectively applied. For instance, how can we contribute to women accessing more agriculture-generated profits? How can we address gaps in the traditional economy that cause inequalities? It's essential to emphasize that all targets are interconnected, so choosing just four targets to guide the transition towards sustainable agriculture proved a bit challenging, as they must be implemented cross-sectionally.

Figure 3. Percentage of selection of each KM-GBF target by the total number of participants in each dialogue, taking into account the relevance to expedite the transition of the agriculture sector towards sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean



5.1.2 Opportunities for advocacy by social and private actors for the implementation of the framework and the transition of the agricultural sector

The second question of the dialogues aimed to gather information about the influence of social and private actors in expediting the transition of the agriculture sector towards necessary sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean. The question posed was: which of the following social and private actors has the greatest opportunity to influence and accelerate the implementation of the KM-GBF and the transition of the agriculture sector? The results obtained were as follows (See Figure 4):

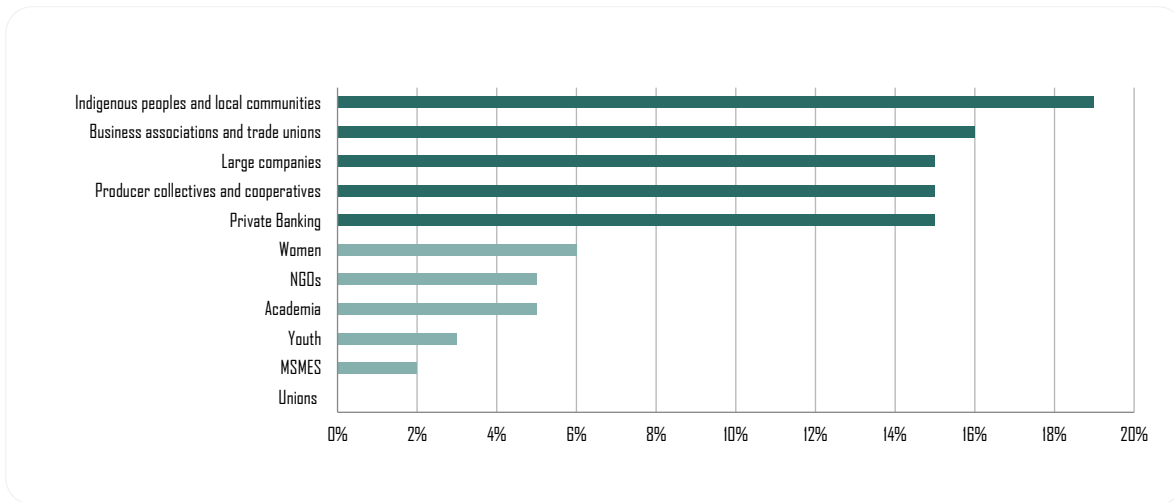
- In first place, with 19% of the total votes, are the PICL (Pequeñas y Medianas Empresas de la Cadena de Valor de la Agricultura Sostenible). Participants consider this group significant because they engage in traditional practices that can be revived and promoted to achieve the transition. Additionally, they are key actors in the agriculture sector.
- In second place, with 16% of the selection, are associations and guilds, as they can represent the interests and concerns of farmers and have influence in policy formulation.
- There is a tie for third place, each with 15% of the votes, among Large Corporations, Private Banks, and Producer Collectives and Cooperatives. The key point here is access to financing and resources for projects and the ability to promote sustainable agricultural practices.

There are experiences with the IPLCs where unused practices have been identified that can be resumed to achieve sustainability. IPLCs, rural youth, and women are fundamental pillars for sustainable development; they are the majority. They are also key players in agriculture, as men migrate from the countryside to the city, while they remain. Business associations and groups control a vast expanse of cultivation areas, having a significant impact on landscape transformation, a challenging situation in the region. There's a counter position between small-scale producers, defending the production of native species and best practices, versus the landscape-changing impact of large agricultural corporations. Companies are indirectly being demanded to adapt to climate change and contribute sustainably. They can help achieve this transition; lessons within value chains, associations, and other actors need to align. Large companies are familiar with the climate change and biodiversity loss context; negotiations must be held with them to reach the targets.

As for private banking, financing needs to be rethought to include sustainable agriculture criteria along with the three sustainability pillars. There are significant opportunities regarding incentives related to agriculture and biodiversity. Credits are granted for projects without evaluating environmental impact. Neither environmental nor biodiversity variables exist in financial incentives for the agriculture sector, which range from small farmers to businessmen. If the financial sector reevaluates

biodiversity variables when granting credits, subsidies, and others, it would be a significant contribution. MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) also have weight, representing around 80% of jobs in our region. A partnership where everyone identifies their roles should be sought.

Figure 4. Percentage of selection of which of the following social and private actors has the greatest opportunity to influence to accelerate the implementation of the KM-GBF and the transition of the agricultural sector



5.1.3 Advocacy opportunities for government actors for the implementation of the framework and the transition of the agriculture sector

The third question of the dialogues was posed with the aim of gathering information on the influence of governmental actors in expediting the transition of the agriculture sector towards necessary sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean. The question was: which of the following governmental actors has the greatest opportunity to influence and accelerate the implementation of the KM-GBF and the transition of the agriculture sector? The results obtained were as follows (See Figure 5):

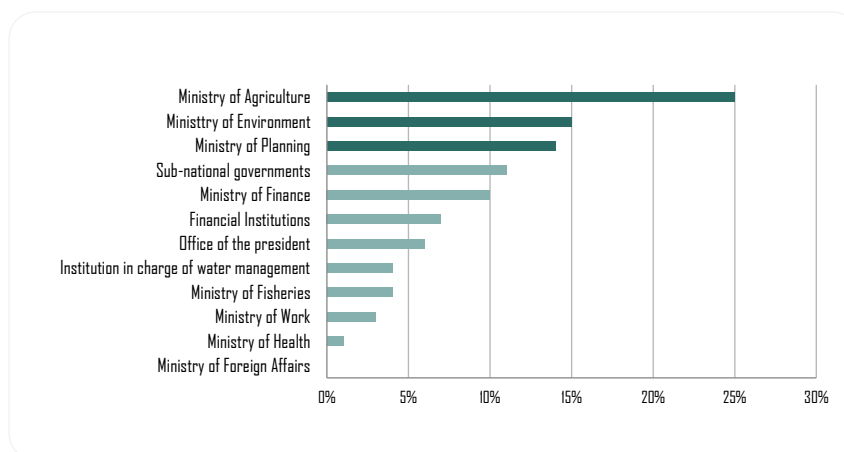
- In first place, with 25% of the votes, the Ministry of Agriculture was selected, identified as the governmental actor with the most influence on policies and regulations.
- With 15%, the second place went to the Ministry of the Environment, closely linked to environmental commitments and standards.
- In third place, the Ministry of Planning received 14% of the votes, emphasizing the importance of formulating plans that include the logistical and operational aspects of the government.

According to the reasons provided by the participants, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment have significant influence since they offer various opportunities to improve practices. It is also essential for the Ministries of Planning and

Finance to be involved because administrative pathways can be obstructed otherwise. Planning should integrate development around nature. The challenge is to contribute to the narratives; biodiversity needs to shift from being seen as a development barrier to an opportunity that drives it, generating jobs and sustainable infrastructure. There are biodiversity planning tools that, in implementation, face many barriers and are not achieved. Involving the Ministry of Health is crucial to connect the health of food and ecosystems with public health. Achieving a transition and meeting objectives requires allies. Through the ministries, thematic guidelines are established, which must persist beyond governmental terms. Through these entities, resources are oriented and prioritized at the national and international cooperation levels.

The national government can establish a public policy to promote sustainable agriculture and responsible water use, which would have a major influence. Subnational governments have a closer relationship with stakeholders, allowing us to identify the most efficient activities. Combining the two would accelerate action and implementation.

Figure 5. Percentage of selection of which of the following government actors has the greatest opportunity to influence to accelerate the implementation of the KM-GBF and the transition of the agricultural sector



5.2 Second round of discussions: The challenges of comprehensive development planning and its link with biodiversity and agriculture in LAC

5.2.1 KM-GBF targets, sustainable planning processes and public policies for the transition of the agricultural sector

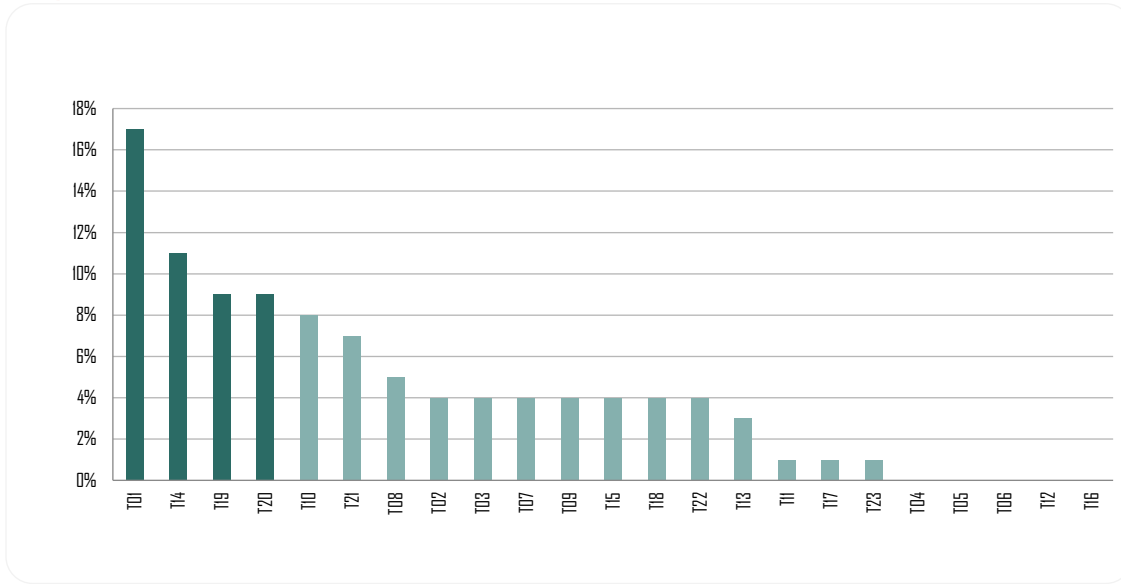
The first question from the second block of dialogues was posed to gather information about the importance of the targets in supporting sustainable planning processes and public policies to expedite the transition of the agriculture sector towards necessary sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean. The question posed was: Which are the three most relevant KM-GBF targets to support sustainable planning processes and public policies to drive the transition of the agriculture sector towards sustainability? The results obtained were as follows (See Figure 6):

- In first place, with 17% of the votes, is Target 1. Participants considered this target the most relevant, as integrated spatial planning effectively manages the territory, prioritizing land use based on ecological characteristics and achieving sustainable management in activities carried out.
- In second place, with 11% of the votes, is Target 14. To drive the transition towards sustainability in the agricultural sector, participants deem it important to integrate biodiversity at all levels of policies, regulations, and planning processes.
- There is a tie for third place, each with 9% of the votes, between Targets 19 and 20. This is because increasing financial resources to achieve planning processes and biodiversity targets is equally important as strengthening capacities, cooperation, and technology transfer.

Target 1 is related to public policies needing backing in their implementation. In some countries in the region, water use planning is a strategic line. It must be considered that a planning process detached from territorial actors will not be sustainable, and intervention proposals should address territorial needs. Likewise, biodiversity should be part of any definition of public policy planning, and the interconnected point we aim to reach must be defined.

Target 14 is also fundamental and cross-cutting. Biodiversity is what keeps us on this planet, so it's crucial that all actors and sectors are integrated for this significant challenge, which is the global framework. Regarding targets 19 and 20, they are related because our region requires resources and their reorientation, creating capacities and cooperation is crucial for these to be efficiently used. From target 10, it is recognized that agriculture and climate change are the primary accelerators of biodiversity loss. Processes must be managed from both the public and private sectors, not just leaving the private sector to handle it.

Figure 6. Percentage of selection of which are the three most relevant targets to support sustainable planning processes and public policies to accelerate the implementation of the KM-GBF and the transition of the agricultural sector



5.2.2 Governance mechanism and effective implementation of the global framework

The second question from the second block of dialogues aimed to gather information on the choice of which governance mechanism is most effective for implementation. The question posed was: From the development planning perspective mentioned in the plenary by ILPES (multi-sectoral/multi-actor/multi-scalar/intertemporal), which governance mechanism do you consider the most appropriate for effective implementation? The results obtained were as follows (See Figure 6):

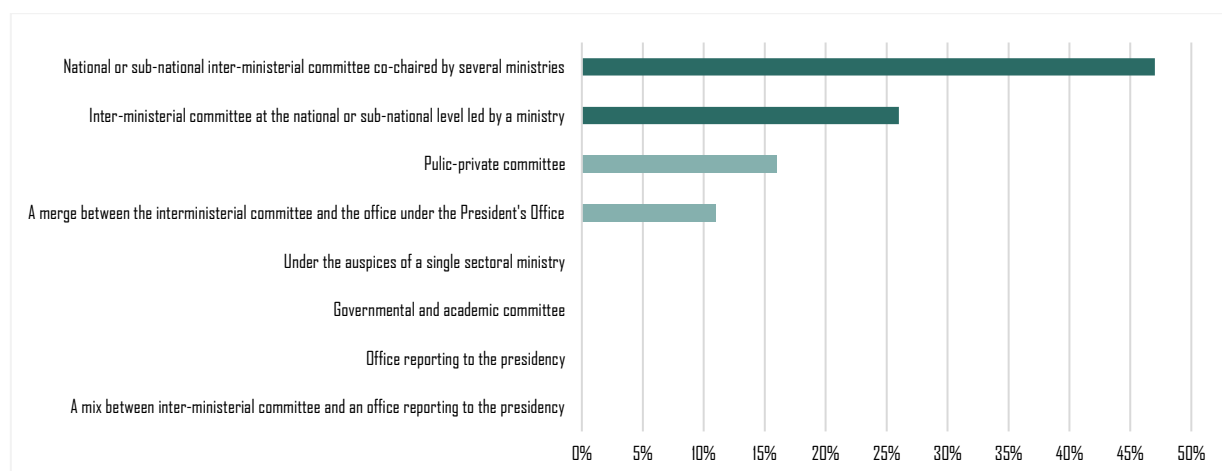
- In the first place, with a vast majority of votes at 47%, participants chose the National or subnational inter-ministerial committee led by several ministries. Coordinated efforts are of utmost importance to have broader coverage and to allocate resources from all ministries, ensuring more efficient policymaking in the agricultural sector's development.
- In second place, with 26% of the votes, participants selected the National or subnational inter-ministerial committee led by a single ministry. This choice might suggest that having a single leading entity might streamline processes, albeit potentially lacking a multidisciplinary approach.

It's challenging to identify a ministry that doesn't relate to biodiversity. The insights of various stakeholders are required to establish coherent biodiversity policies, ensuring complementary work at the normative, technical, and administrative levels. For instance, many ministries undertake territorial planning in line with their competencies, but these processes often lack coordination. Thus, if one ministry leads, especially on biodiversity matters, leadership typically falls to the Ministry of the Environment, which unfortunately holds limited decision-making power. The Ministry of Finance might be a better candidate, given its more substantial lobbying power. Leading by a single ministry could standardize norms regarding territories and

coordinate with other entities or commissions. The drawback is the potential lack of a broader perspective and perhaps not possessing the complete necessary competence. The government must play a role in governance as both a regulator and promoter of public policies, with the participation and involvement of all societal actors and territories. The challenge lies in promoting citizen participation in public policy planning while ensuring financial flow.

Successful programs in Latin America, such as the fight against extreme poverty, involved the highest-level entities with offices in the presidency. Similarly, to elevate these policies beyond the environmental realm, they should be overseen by these top-tier entities. The chosen mechanism should encompass all sustainable planning components (multi-sectoral, multi-actor, multi-scalar, and intertemporal).

Figure 7. Percentage of selection of which governance mechanism you consider the most appropriate for effective implementation



6. Conclusions and recommendations

- It is essential to involve all relevant stakeholders. The effective implementation of the KM- GBF and the transition of the agriculture sector require close collaboration among government, private, and social actors. This multidimensional cooperation will be crucial in overcoming the challenges associated with the sustainability transition. It will ensure that all perspectives are considered and that there is collective ownership of the proposed solutions.
- Planning and decision-making processes must be inclusive and participatory. This not only ensures the effective implementation of policies but also strengthens democracy and ensures that policies are socially just.
- Target 10, related to sustainable agriculture, has been identified as essential for the transition to more sustainable practices in the sector. Recognizing its importance is a fundamental step toward creating more effective policies. Latin

America and the Caribbean face unique challenges in transitioning to sustainable agriculture, but they also have significant opportunities. With proper planning, cooperation, and execution, the region can become a leader in sustainable agriculture practice

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