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INNOVATIVE BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING AND GOVERNANCE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: DIALOGUES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SECTORS



Berry harvest. ©Tim Mossholder

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Three virtual dialogues highlighted the key role of development planning, sustainable agriculture, biodiversity mainstreaming and coherent incentives, as well as the need for a multi-ministerial and participatory governance mechanism for the full and effective implementation of the Kunming-Montreal biodiversity framework.

Embedding transformational change within the governance framework is now the challenge for closing the gap between the ambition of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and its implementation! Accountability and action encompass multisectoral, multilevel dimensions and short- and long-term approaches. Responding to these challenges requires recognition of the interdependence between biodiversity, economy and society, and policies to drive a just transition.

A series of “mainstreaming tools” could guide this work, acting as transformational levers to raise ambition, enable engagement of new agents of change and ensure that action for biodiversity enables just and sustainable outcomes for society.²

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in collaboration with the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework EU Support project, convened three virtual dialogues on 29 June 4 July and 9 July 2023, to reflect on challenges and opportunities in development planning and sustainable agriculture in the implementation of the KMGBF in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

“THROUGH THESE DIALOGUES, WE ARE DISCUSSING ISSUES BEYOND PROTECTED AREAS OR THE NUMBER OF ENDANGERED SPECIES, WHICH USED TO BE THE CLASSIC FOCUS FOR DECADES. WE ARE SHIFTING TOWARD NEW DIMENSIONS RELATED TO INCLUSION OR NEW ACTORS, DECISION-MAKING, AND TERRITORIAL AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.”

- Hesiquio Benítez Díaz
Former Chair of CBD's Subsidiary Body on
Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice



Coffee harvest.
©Mpango - Pexels

1 V. Alvarado, M. Tambutti and A. Rankovic, "Experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean with mainstreaming biodiversity in the productive, economic and financial sectors", Project Documents (LC/TS.2022/206), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2022.

2 Transformative actions #40 – Biodiversity mainstreaming & innovative governance: key learnings from Latin America

3 ECLAC and Expertise France (2023). Summary of the multi-stakeholder virtual dialogues. [Online].

1. TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

In the LAC region, the transition towards sustainability in agriculture, livestock, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry is of vital importance. Participants in all three dialogues emphasised that KMGBF Target 10 holds the greatest potential for supporting policies and actions aimed at facilitating the transition to sustainability in the agricultural sector. **This common perception among stakeholders attests to the significance of implementing sustainable practices in that sector for biodiversity conservation and the key role of this target for the delivery of the KMGBF as a whole.**

With regard to a second target, the private sector and government gave priority to spatial planning (Target 1), while civil society leaned towards sustainable consumption and food-waste reduction (Target 16). Land-use change was acknowledged as the primary driver of biodiversity loss, highlighting the need to address habitat fragmentation. The main reflections emphasised equitable participation; the precautionary approach; integrity of management plans; interdependence of targets; and cross-cutting territorial management to move toward integrated management that considers the interconnectedness of targets – for instance, the relationship between subsidies, pollution and territorial planning.

As for the third prioritised target, three divergent approaches emerged. Firstly, the private sector focused on Targets 18 (re-evaluation of agricultural subsidies) and 19 (need to increase financial resources). Government actors divided their choice evenly between Targets 18 and 13 (fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, and digital sequence information). The social sector chose six targets: Target 3 (conservation), Target 7 (pollution), Target 8 (climate change), Target 9 (sustainable management of wild species), Target 14 (biodiversity mainstreaming) and Target 22 (full and inclusive participation). These dissimilar approaches reflect the diversity of perspectives and emphases, highlighting the complexity of addressing biodiversity across different sectors. It underscores the need for distinct yet coordinated approaches to address sustainability that recognise the interconnectedness and multidimensionality of environmental and social challenges.

Key messages on the most relevant KMGBF targets to accelerate the transition of the agriculture sector to sustainability	
Relevance of sustainable agriculture	Facilitate in-depth changes at both the individual and institutional levels to attain agricultural sustainability.
Use territorial planning as a cross-cutting foundation	Harness the cross-cutting potential of territorial planning to address challenges and barriers in KMGBF implementation. Actively involve indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), as well as women and youth, in promoting equitable decision-making.
Ensure the effective impact of mobilised resources	Generate sustainable investments and establish effective monitoring tools for both territorial planning and the economic incentives implemented in the region.
Interconnection of targets and systemic approach	Develop tools to facilitate the inherent interconnection of multiple targets within the framework and their cross-cutting and systemic approach.
Mainstream biodiversity	Identify and analyse dependencies and impacts, especially those with positive, replicable and scalable effects that create synergies in support of biodiversity.
Incorporation of a rights and equity approach	Implement a rights-based approach, with a particular focus on IPLCs. Seize the momentum of KMGBF to create opportunities for small farmers and producers.
Address inequality and ensure equality	Address inequality and ensure equal representation and land tenure in the region through the implementation of KMGBF targets.

Demystification of and access to information on genetic resources	Tackle inequities in access to data and information by enhancing government communication with all stakeholders, including by providing capacity building for IPLCs.
Integration of rural and urban areas	Develop policies to progress towards a comprehensive vision of the agricultural sector that incorporates urban sustainability.
Financing and rigorous financial control	Accompany funding with stringent control processes and generate science-based data to demonstrate its positive impacts, ensuring the effective and efficient allocation of financial resources.

2. PLANNING: A PREREQUISITE FOR CROSS-CUTTING TRANSFORMATION

Addressing intranational territorial unbalances is essential for enhancing people’s quality of life and fostering social cohesion, as well as for mitigating socio-economic, environmental, political and institutional inequalities. The Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and ECLAC have developed an approach for the design, implementation and evaluation of development planning and its policies across four critical dimensions: intersectoral coordination, multi-stakeholder participation, coordination among government levels, and intertemporal principle to ensure that current targets and actions align with long-term objectives. This approach served as the foundation for generating recommendations for moving towards the mainstreaming, governance and transformation set out in the KMGBF.

Participants were tasked with prioritising key KMGBF targets for development planning processes and public policies aimed at enhancing the sustainability of agriculture in the region. They were also asked to offer recommendations for advancing towards cross-cutting integration, innovative governance and the transformation outlined in the framework. Target 1, which is centred on integrated participatory spatial planning with a focus on reducing land/sea-use change and respecting the rights of IPLCs, was considered the highest priority by all three sectors. This target was deemed crucial for bolstering sustainable territorial planning and public policies related to sustainable agriculture. **Some of the key factors underscored included the necessity of participatory governance in territorial planning, fostering dialogues with the private sector, and maintaining a long-term perspective when addressing territorial needs.**

“THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACHIEVING THE GOALS OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK MUST BE EVERYONE’S CONCERN; NO SINGLE ACTOR CAN GUARANTEE ANY OF THEM ON ITS OWN. FINDING COMMON GROUND AMONG THE INTERESTS OF DIFFERENT ACTORS IS THE KEY TO PROGRESS.”

– Santiago Lorenzo, Head of the Economics of Climate Change Unit, ECLAC

Target 14, concerning the mainstreaming of biodiversity into policies and regulations, secured second place; it received significant support from both the private sector and the government sector. The attendees regarded biodiversity mainstreaming as an enabling condition that unifies the understanding of the significance of biodiversity for sustaining life and regional development. Participants from the social sector gave priority to Target 10, related to sustainable agriculture, while highlighting that agriculture and climate change are among the primary drivers of biodiversity loss in the region.



Peruvian farmers plowing the land. ©Saraí Carrasco

4 Maffei, L. (2021) "Just Transition and Green Jobs in the Framework of Biodiversity Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean", ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The third-place priorities differed by sector. Organised civil society emphasised Target 2, which focuses on ecosystem restoration, thereby highlighting how restoration practices in the region mitigate one of the primary consequences of unsustainable agriculture. The government sector, on the other hand, favoured Targets 19 and 20 (30% each), centred on resource mobilisation, capacity building and technology transfer. This underscored the importance of addressing the financial gap in biodiversity-related resources and their efficient utilisation.

The third priority of the private sector was tied between Target 8 (reducing the effects of climate change) and Target 18. Participants emphasised the close relationship between Target 8 and sustainable production, as well as the interplay between climate change and biodiversity. Target 18 was selected by participants due to their concern about the way current subsidy mechanisms contribute to land-use change, thereby highlighting the urgent need for reform.

Key messages on KMGBF targets with the greatest potential to support sustainable planning processes and public policies to drive the agricultural transition towards sustainability	
Importance of participatory governance in planning	Create tools for land-use and territorial planning with local-level participatory governance to foster the development of sustainable long-term public policies.
Comprehensive approach and multisectoral collaboration	Draft policies for the integration and active engagement of actors and sectors, while considering tools to mainstream biodiversity in the planning sectors.
Capacity building	Enhance capacity building for sharing knowledge and experiences among all stakeholders to foster the collective development of public policies, using a holistic approach for national and regional development.
Resource mobilisation	Enhance resource mobilisation and implement effective monitoring actions to evaluate the proper allocation of resources more directly.
Establish a strategy for the implementation of long-term goals	Establish enduring state policies rather than short-term government policies.
New economic indicators	Revise economic indicators, including GDP, to create new economic and social metrics that accurately reflect environmental impacts, thereby encouraging informed and responsible decision-making.
Incentives for transformational market change	Re-evaluate current subsidies and explore more sustainable incentive mechanisms, such as market certifications.

3. IPLCs AND COLLECTIVES VIEWED AS HIGHEST-IMPACT STAKEHOLDERS

When prioritising stakeholders with the most significant impact in promoting the implementation of the KMGBF and the transition of the agricultural sector, the results placed IPLCs in first place, followed by associations and trade unions. In third place came collectives and cooperatives, highlighting the territorial significance of small-scale producers in the production of food and other products that depend on biodiversity, such as timber. Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises make up 99.5% of all enterprises in the LAC region overall – and not just in the agricultural sector. Along with self-employment, they account for 74% of jobs⁴, rendering them essential for driving change. Large companies occupied the fourth place in the three dialogues.

+ Participants from organised civil society and the government sector reached a consensus that IPLCs hold the greatest potential. However, in the private-sector dialogue, participants chose large companies. It can be noted that IPLCs received fewer votes from private-sector participants.

+ The associations and trade unions category obtained second place in the three dialogues. However, in the dialogues with civil society and the private sector, this category shared second place with the collectives and cooperatives category.
 + Third place differed according to dialogue. Civil society selected women, the private sector chose private banks, and the government sector opted for private banks and large companies.

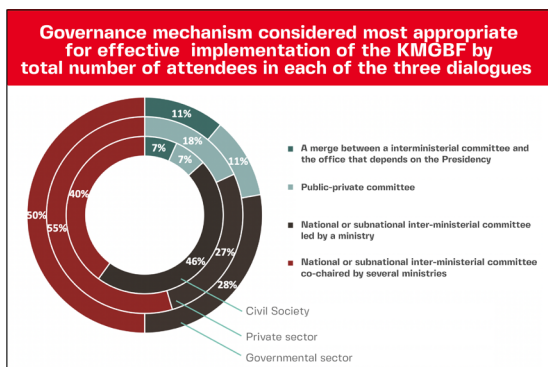
4. IMPLEMENTATION VIA AN INTERSECTORAL APPROACH

Successful implementation of transition policies in key sectors requires robust collaboration. In the dialogues, two overarching and potentially complementary governance mechanisms for the effective implementation of the KMGBF stood out.

The first was interministerial committees set up at the national or subnational level to encourage involvement by the public, private and civil-society sectors. These committees can be co-chaired by multiple ministries or led by a single ministry. There was quite a bit of discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of both options, focusing on the capacity of each government to organise the work and execute the required actions. In particular, it was noted that having the committee co-chaired with bodies outside the environmental sector (e.g. with the ministries of planning and finance) would facilitate the committee's effective involvement and improve its coordination. Nonetheless, the challenge of reaching a consensus could also hinder progress. In the case of committees chaired by the Ministry of the Environment, participation by officials from other ministries tends to be at a lower level.

The second mechanism was the concept of merging interministerial and public-private committees, which would enable alignment of policies and regulations related to biodiversity agendas. Both of these mechanisms can be integrated into the entities responsible for the 2030 Agenda in the respective countries of the region.

Some participants recommended taking inspiration from successful programmes in the region (e.g. those addressing extreme poverty), which involve the teaming-up between high-level government committees and the office of the president of the country. Participants also thought it was vital to involve subnational and local governments as crucial actors to foster integration and dialogue and to establish effective collaboration mechanisms for more efficient development planning in the region. A limited number of participants thought that a public-private committee would be the most appropriate governance mechanism.





Photograph 1: Coffee agricultural landscape in Costa Rica. ©Raul Cole

Photograph 2: Pineapple production in Mexico. ©Los Muertos Crew - Pexels

Participants also emphasised the necessity of devising specific mechanisms and tools to facilitate effective communication within sectoral strategies and plans. These mechanisms should align with the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and draw up comparable priority objectives among the countries in the region. There was also a strong emphasis on capitalising on the process of aligning and updating the NBSAPs and exploring more efficient formats for national commitments, which would enable agile and timely implementation of the actions agreed upon by the various stakeholders involved.

5. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HARMONIOUS COORDINATION

Participants emphasised the need to consolidate synergies with the development-planning sector and its various regional agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They stressed the significance of cooperation, coordination and consensus in developing long-term national public policies. Planning ministries were said to be pivotal actors in this endeavour, as they set thematic guidelines that extend beyond government terms of office and guide the allocation of resources at both the national and international levels. Despite their weak engagement in biodiversity matters, they could serve as a significant catalyst for change by facilitating transitions towards sustainability using a comprehensive approach.

The importance of determining roles and responsibilities

The adoption of the KMGBF has brought to light a critical gap: the absence of specific operational definitions for the sectors and actors involved, leaving each country responsible for implementing and aligning the framework with its national and international objectives. This is a significant issue for regional implementation that demands attention.

A relevant recommendation from the dialogues is to clearly specify the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders at the national or subnational level as an enabling condition for the implementation of the framework. Building on this foundation, other pertinent processes such as the SDGs can be integrated, but with clear guidance on how they will harmonise with the targets of the framework. To attain goals in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, it is imperative to have flexibility in adjusting to local circumstances as well as effective collaboration across various government levels, sectors and stakeholders. This extends to critical aspects like sustainable food production and consumption, as well as strategies for addressing climate change.

Following this approach, the roles of sectors and actors should be structured by national and subnational governments and discussed and approved by various stakeholder groups, such

as those involved in the entire value chain or food system. When determining these roles, they should be based on the targets of the KMGBF. In this way, biodiversity mainstreaming processes would be facilitated and a conducive environment created for their acceptance by the various sectors. It would also enable adaptation to specific contexts and involve actors responsible for indirect factors contributing to biodiversity loss, thereby fostering a comprehensive, inclusive approach that encompasses all of society, including typically marginalised groups such as IPLCs, women and youth.

“BIODIVERSITY SHOULD NOT ONLY BE CONSIDERED FROM AN ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE. LIKE GENDER OR TERRITORIAL COHESION, IT MUST PERMEATE AS A PUBLIC-POLICY APPROACH THAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND GENERATE TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE.”

- Alicia Williner, Research Assistant, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning - ECLAC

Urgently involve new stakeholders

Participants emphasised that continuous development of sector-specific capacities and alignment of plans with the long-term vision of the KMGBF are crucial for success. This alignment should actively engage the ministries of planning and finance and enable them to operate through administrative channels that streamline coordination and policy integration within each sector. Introducing nature as a central pillar of development and adjusting narratives to position biodiversity as an opportunity, rather than a barrier, are essential steps to advance this transformation.

Limited financial resources is a significant constraint, as it confines activities to short-term ones and predominantly addresses direct drivers of biodiversity loss without tackling their underlying causes. Participants acknowledged the importance of targeted capacity building and the establishment of knowledge platforms as crucial for overcoming these challenges.



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