



Let's find out what works best for biodiversity

Nele Marien, Friends of the Earth International

Item 12 of Agenda

After the successful adoption of the KMGBF, it is essential to review which of its implementation measures attain the best results for achieving the objectives of the Convention and which ones might be less effective despite significant efforts.

Such a review is not intended to criticise the different approaches or effectiveness of individual Parties' actions. Instead, it is an important step towards understanding which types of measures best achieve positive biodiversity results, with the aim of enhancing these during the next phase of the KMGBF.

We therefore propose that at COP 18 a review of the effectiveness of measures to implement the goals and targets of the KMGBF in line with the objectives and principles of the Convention is conducted. This is necessary in order to have a proper understanding when considering the follow-up to the KMGBF.

Several of the measures have sufficient implementation experience - even from before the adoption of the GBF - to be able to review their effectiveness.

Examples of measures for implementation that could be reviewed include:

- Spatial planning
- Strictly protected areas
- OECMs
- Indigenous protected areas
- Nature-based solutions
- Ecosystem-based approaches
- Sustainable intensification
- Agroecology

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Can biodiversity-based products and the bioeconomy be "sustainable"? Lessons learned from the bioenergy disaster

By Simone Lovera, Biomass Action Network

The "bioeconomy" is not an issue included in the GBF, yet it's proposed as an agenda item for COP17, despite many other essential elements needing to be reviewed on a potentially overloaded agenda. The topic already sparked controversy at the last SBSTTA meeting.

Despite the "bio" in its name, there is no guarantee that the bioeconomy, or even biodiversity-based products, will actually lead to biodiversity conservation and restoration. On the contrary. Experiences with the bioenergy industry, which in reality forms the bulk of the bioeconomy, have taught us that a rapidly increased use of "biodiversity-based products" for a sector with an almost insatiable appetite like the energy sector is a recipe for disaster.

The EU alone burns more than 400 million tonnes of wood per year, stimulated by a lush 500 billion USD of subsidies, leading to widespread forest degradation and deforestation within and outside the EU. The IPCC has estimated that between 100 to 800 million ha of land will be needed to meet bioenergy demand by 2050, and some scenarios expect up to 1,500 million ha to be necessary. This will trigger massive conversion of forests and other ecosystems.

In Indonesia alone, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry is planning to allocate 1.29 million hectares of land to the production of bioenergy. And in Brazil, a recent analysis of drivers of forest loss found that while cattle ranching remains the main direct driver, the overall area of pasture land actually remained relatively stable the past 20 years.

It describes how monoculture tree plantations, which are a key source of biomass for wood burning, plus sugar cane and soybeans, which are major sources of biofuels, are driving cattle ranching into, amongst others, the Amazon biome.

One major dilemma with the sustainability of biodiversity-based products like wood is that sustainability is very much quantity-related. Overconsumption of biodiversity-based products all too often triggers resource depletion. So, ironically, an increase in the consumption of "sustainable" products often leads to a decrease in sustainability of those products, as has been demonstrated clearly in the forestry sector.

It is clear that the CBD should not promote sectors that are major drivers of biodiversity loss, even if they are "biodiversity-based". Let us please focus the Multi-Year Program of Work on tools and guidance that actually contribute to biodiversity conservation and restoration, and not on a sector that has already proven to be a disaster for biodiversity.

Asymmetries in Resource Mobilization: Direct Access for Frontline Communities Still Overlooked

By Valentina Figuera Martínez, Global Forest Coalition (GFC)

An important and overlooked point of contention in the discussions on resource mobilisation is direct access to funds for women, Indigenous peoples, local communities and youth on the ground, with only a few parties calling for it to be considered, including Mexico and Colombia.

CBD constituencies called for the delivery of the GEF's "aspirational" portfolio-level target to allocate 20% of shares to finance actions by Indigenous Peoples and local communities for the conservation, restoration, sustainable use and management of biodiversity. Women, especially from IP&LCs, must be included in those shares.

Rightsholders on the ground are not yet seeing any benefits. The existing financial mechanisms often implement controversial projects (1), with high risks(2) and lack of free prior and informed consent. Furthermore, frontline communities in developing countries, especially women's groups, have little or no access to these funds.

Contrasting realities

The important roles and contributions of women, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and youth for the implementation of the GBF need to be recognised with adequate mechanisms, and without intermediaries, plus effective, timely and feasible access to biodiversity finance.

"There are many barriers to women having access to these funds and financial instruments, starting with access to information and the technological means to obtain these resources.

This scenario is particularly severe in Indigenous communities, due to the challenges of living in historically unequal territories," explained Camila Romero, of Colectivo VientoSur, an organization working with Mapuche Indigenous communities in southern Chile (3).

Despite best efforts, support for genuine community-led projects aimed at ensuring human rights-based and gender-responsive approaches to biodiversity conservation is still limited. The Global North needs to recognize its historic responsibility in perpetuating inequalities and the failure to provide financial resources, but parties from the Global South also need to ensure that frontline communities have culturally appropriate, equitable access to financial resources, without intermediaries.

"In the Colombian Amazon, where large funds, multilateral investment programs or bilateral programs are focused at the moment, communities are aware that these large financing projects exist, but there is no change in the environmental realities, nor resources that can positively impact the life of the communities and their rights, or address the environmental crisis. Rather, there are complaints and reports on how these resources arrive in the country and somehow remain in offices in the capital, Bogotá, but don't reach the communities," complained Diego Cardona, a forest and biodiversity expert who has worked with Colombia's Censat Agua Viva and the World Rainforest Movement (4)

1. <https://globalforestcoalition.org/forest-cover-68/>

2. <https://globalforestcoalition.org/forest-cover-68/>

3. Listen to GFC's podcast here: <https://globalforestcoalition.org/roots-of-resilience-episode-3/>

4. <https://globalforestcoalition.org/roots-of-resilience-episode-3/>

Thin and Shallow: Private Financial Instruments for Biodiversity

Third World Network

The track record of private financial mechanisms aimed at funding conservation of biological diversity is patchy at best. Due to lack of rigorous and consistent benchmarks and monitoring, these investments may not necessarily safeguard biodiversity and could even, in some cases, have adverse impacts.

Further, despite decades of attempts to draw private capital to biodiversity protection, the quantum of finance remains limited, especially in the highly biodiverse countries of the Global South where it is most needed. In fact, for-profit biodiversity finance is often geographically constrained, with the majority of investment occurring in the Global North. A BIOFIN report in 2020 notes that impact investing in conservation is concentrated in the US and Europe, only recently reaching developing countries.

There is little evidence that return-generating biodiversity conservation will deliver large amounts of new funding to biodiversity. For example, one report estimates the total value of ‘green financial products’ at between \$3.8–6.3 billion per annum; by comparison, it is estimated that there is \$78.6–87.4 billion per annum in public funding to biodiversity. In 2019, forest-based carbon offsetting generated less than \$200 million in global transactions.

This is because mobilizing and scaling private finance towards biodiversity protection remains challenging, as most biodiversity enhancing outcomes do not create revenue. The low rates of return, high risk, long timelines and high transaction costs hinder investment and scalability.

Caution should therefore be exercised in deploying resources towards promoting biodiversity-focused private financial instruments. Instead, policy coordination to address drivers of biodiversity loss in the financial system is needed.

The above summary is drawn from *Thin and Shallow: Financial Instruments for Biodiversity Conservation and Their Outlook*, by Jessica Dempsey, Audrey Irvine-Broque, Jens Christiansen and Patrick Bigger (2024). <https://www.twn.my/title2/books/Thin%20and%20Shallow.htm>

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