

Thematic Paper 5

From National to Local Implementation: A Collaborative, Multi-Level Effort to Achieve Joint Climate and Biodiversity Goals



05

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Key Messages

- ▶ Multilateral agendas will not succeed in their objectives unless they provide local state and non-state actors a seat at the table, from where they can inform and influence the process as equal partners with a mandate and under a well-performing multi-level governance system.
- ▶ The tenets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes can clash with local actors' visions of a desirable future, or their relations with nature. It is crucial to understand and find ways to incorporate these notions and the views of indigenous peoples and local communities into the design of initiatives.
- ▶ The politics affecting climate and biodiversity have often been culture blind and disregarded the values and visions of marginalised groups, such as indigenous peoples and local communities. Challenges remain in the meaningful representation of indigenous peoples and local communities' views in climate policy and action, as well as in recognising their rights over resources in land- and seascapes and their ability to influence climate- and biodiversity-related decision-making.
- ▶ Transformative action, which includes re-organising governance processes, is needed to solve the climate and biodiversity crises. Local and non-state actors are the nimbler parts of this complex machinery, and they can promote change at higher levels.

- ▶ To achieve joint climate and biodiversity goals, national governments must meaningfully include local stakeholders through just multi-level governance. To enhance and strengthen joint implementation at sub-national and local levels, national governments should adopt a multi-level coordination approach that identifies and strengthens linkages and synergies between climate change and biodiversity policy planning processes to maximise impact.
- ▶ Devolution of power to sub-national governments and indigenous peoples and local communities brings both benefits and management challenges. It is critical to ensure that capacities and systems are in place to promote sound management of resources at local levels that guarantees the efficient implementation of initiatives and helps attract further funding.

Introduction

Achieving the goals of the CBD and the UNFCCC requires close collaboration with stakeholders across all levels of governance: an effective and representative process of multi-level governance that includes both state and non-state actors. Many such mechanisms for stakeholder interaction have been established in multilateral processes, and new ones keep emerging.

From early days, multilateral processes like the CBD's and the UNFCCC's have made—and increasingly topped up—an effort to be inclusive of the views of local and other sub-national governments, indigenous peoples and local communities (and civil society more broadly), and the private sector. However, more can be done: the extent of engagement and the influence of state and non-state sub-national actors in biodiversity- and climate-related decision-making remains insufficient (Chan et al., 2018; Adenle et al., 2015), even if some progress has been accomplished (Bäckstrand et al., 2017).

Initiatives addressing climate change adaptation, mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and land- and seascape management almost invariably impact people and institutions locally, whether directly or indirectly. However, the design and implementation of biodiversity and climate goals are often set at levels higher than the local. This results in an understanding of biodiversity and climate “success” that is frequently at odds with that of local actors, potentially jeopardising the achievement of what local actors view as a sustainable, desirable future.

Indeed, the failure to examine alternative visions of progress and an unequal process of stakeholder engagement have at times resulted in biodiversity and climate projects increasing, rather than decreasing, people's vulnerability (Eriksen et al., 2021). Beyond the intrinsic negative and objectionable nature of this approach, it can also erode the sustainability goals of multilateral processes.

This Thematic Paper looks at the importance of multi-level governance for attaining climate and biodiversity goals, proceeding then to investigate what steps and mechanisms the CBD and UNFCCC processes have each created to ensure sub-national and local actors' engagement. It goes on to explore new pathways through which sub-national actors may contribute to advancing

climate and biodiversity goals set out at multi-lateral levels, identifying challenges and opportunities. Finally, the paper offers opportunities for party delegates of both the CBD and the UNFCCC processes to strengthen and enhance the joint implementation of biodiversity and climate goals at sub-national and local levels.

What Is Multi-level Governance, and Why Is It Important for Climate and Biodiversity?

An effective response to climate change and biodiversity loss requires new governance approaches that can “bridge or even transcend governmental levels and societal domains” (Bauer & Steurer, 2014, p. 121). While the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) is primarily the responsibility of national governments, the scale and ambition of the agendas call for contributions from stakeholders across society, including local actors, such as indigenous peoples and local communities, sub-national governments, and civil society organisations. This becomes particularly essential, given that up to two thirds of biodiversity legislation is adopted and enacted at the sub-national and local levels in some parts of the world (CBD, 2021); as such, both require and benefit from meaningful, inclusive participation from local actors.

The complexity and interconnectedness of climate change and biodiversity loss (for further information, see [Thematic Paper 1: Linkages and Synergies Between International Instruments on Biodiversity and Climate Change](#)) demand collaboration and cooperation across sectors and in partnership with local communities that understand best how to address local sustainable development challenges. Hence, it becomes fundamental that multilateral forums and national governments support the establishment and promotion of a whole-of-society approach. Such an approach promotes a change of paradigms, goals, and values, the formation of partnerships across sectors and levels of government, and welcomes contributions by a wide range of stakeholders to achieve collective impact.

Only if sub-national governments—both rural and urban, each with its distinct context—and indigenous peoples and local communities are actively engaged and contribute to the process of developing robust global biodiversity and climate frameworks, can the international community foster ownership and build a strong support base for their implementation (for further information, see [Thematic Paper 4: Good Governance for Integrated Climate and Biodiversity Policy-Making](#)).

Multi-level governance is the process that seeks to build links across levels of government and governance in an intentional and strategic fashion. Four enabling factors can support an integrated approach to multi-level governance ([Dazé et al., 2016](#); [NAP Global Network, 2021](#)):

- 1. Institutional arrangements** refer to coordination and integration processes between local, sub-national, and national levels. The setup and functioning of institutional arrangements can contribute to advancing or hindering the progress of local climate and biodiversity action.
- 2. Information sharing** facilitates a coordinated development and implementation of plans and policies. This helps ensure that action is representative and locally relevant. The information used for climate and biodiversity planning should be inclusive of indigenous, traditional, and local knowledge and interests.

- 3. Capacity building and development** of actors from national to local levels that work on climate and biodiversity efforts—from planning to monitoring and evaluation—facilitates effective engagement vertically and horizontally (across sectors and institutions).

- 4. Financing** from the supranational and multi-lateral to national and sub-national levels, in ways that are effective and transparent, is crucial for achieving the delivery of local and national objectives on climate and biodiversity.

The benefits of multi-level governance in relation to developmental processes are widely recognised ([Fuhr et al., 2018](#); [Pahl-Wostl, 2009](#); [UNFCCC, 2016](#); [Verkerk et al., 2015](#)). A study found that comprehensive and flexible institutional arrangements across all levels of government had helped the successful implementation of urban adaptation actions ([Chu et al., 2018](#)). A governance system that prioritises multi-level, multistakeholder engagement has, by this very fact, built a foundation to make climate and biodiversity efforts more impactful, just, and representative. Indeed, multi-level governance is now seen as a prerequisite for effective adaptation and biodiversity governance ([Local Governments for Sustainability Canada, 2016](#); [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, 2017, 2018](#); [Terton, 2021](#)).



Historical Role of Sub-national Actors in the CBD and UNFCCC Processes: Similarities and gaps

Under the CBD, the role of indigenous peoples and local communities in conservation has been recognised through multiple instruments. Both the CBD and its scientific body, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services acknowledge the importance of indigenous and local knowledge in their work and explicitly support a diversity of knowledge systems/bodies of knowledge to inform international biodiversity assessments and decision-making. Similarly, the CBD has made efforts to raise awareness of the role of indigenous peoples and local communities in the holistic conservation, preservation, sustainable use, and management of biodiversity (**CBD Conference of the Parties [COP], 2016**). In addition, the CBD has called for the effective engagement of sub-national and local governments, for example, in raising their awareness of the importance of biodiversity and ecosystems services and functions. It also promotes the establishment of strategies for enhancing contributions of sub-national and local governments in the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs).

Some key examples of how the CBD has recognised sub-national and non-government stakeholders as relevant players in priority setting and decision-making include:

- ▶ The **Global Biodiversity Forum** (1992–2006) was an important initial mechanism for stakeholder engagement in the early days of the Convention.
- ▶ The **Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020** and its **Aichi Biodiversity Targets**, especially those under Strategic Goals A (“Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society”) and E (“Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building”), established a relevant role for non-state actors in the process (**CBD, 2020**). Aichi Target 18 focuses specifically on traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use. It is the main target related to the implementation of two of the most relevant articles of the CBD—CBD Article 8(j) and Article 10(c)—for indigenous people and local communities and represents a cross-cutting theme for the entire Strategic Plan.
- ▶ The **Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2011–2020)**, endorsed in 2010, “provides suggestions to Parties on how to mobilise and coordinate local actions on biodiversity, to bring national strategies and plans into the local context” (CBD, 2021). It represented a defining moment for bringing local actors closer to the centre of discussions. Furthermore, it proposed ways to enhance collaboration between state and non-state actors, improve cross-scalar communications, and make interactions more effective.

- ▶ The **2020 Edinburgh Declaration and the subsequent Edinburgh Process** highlight the need to expand efforts on multi-level governance and the inclusion of civil society (emphasising indigenous peoples and local communities, women, and youth) to accelerate efforts to achieve the Aichi Targets. Concretely, the Declaration demands proper recognition of the role that sub-national governments play and establishing a multistakeholder platform that ensures their representation.
- ▶ **Local Governments for Sustainability** has played a role in ensuring a strong link between the multilateral process and sub-national actors and urban areas, such as through the **Cities Biodiversity Center**.
- ▶ The participatory process of developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) is set to be completed in time for 2021–2022's COP 15 in Kunming, China, which aims to develop a new framework to halt biodiversity loss by 2030.

Compared to the CBD, the discussion around the role of indigenous peoples and local communities and the inclusion of their knowledge in climate negotiations has—arguably—been more limited. Nonetheless, the UNFCCC has established several processes that demonstrate the importance it gives to multi-level stakeholder engagement. These initiatives have strengthened local stakeholders' and the private sector's contributions to shaping the global response to climate change. Furthermore, during COP 26 in Glasgow in 2021, the relevance of nature and nature-based solutions (Nbs) as vehicles to address the climate and biodiversity crises was recognised and given more centrality.

UNFCCC initiatives to involve indigenous peoples and local communities in climate governance include:

- ▶ The **Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples (LCIP) Platform**, established at the Paris COP 21 in 2015, recognises the need to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices, and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, and provides a platform for the holistic and integrated exchange of experiences and best practices on mitigation and adaptation to strengthen the capacity of local and indigenous actors to engage in the UNFCCC process.
- ▶ The **Lima–Paris Action Agenda**, also in 2015, called for regular engagement of actors in the UNFCCC process with non-party stakeholders, especially in research and development and in technological innovation.
- ▶ The following year, at COP 22, the **Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action** was set up to foster the implementation of the Paris Agreement through enhanced collaboration at various levels of governance at the country level (national to local), including cities and with non-state actors, including businesses.
- ▶ In 2018 the **Talanoa Dialogue Platform** further promoted inclusive and participatory non-state actor engagement and transparency, introducing the notion of empathy and understanding—and storytelling as a vehicle—for building trust among stakeholders.

- ▶ The **Glasgow Climate Pact**, agreed at COP 26 in Glasgow in 2021, emphasises the need for collaboration between indigenous peoples and local communities, other non-state actors, and local and regional governments, in achieving progress on climate. It acknowledges the value of indigenous peoples and local communities' culture and knowledge, as well as the need to protect, conserve, and restore degraded ecosystems.

As for the issue of addressing synergies between climate change and biodiversity in relation to the role of indigenous peoples and local communities—the two conventions had until recently operated in silos, aside from reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD & REDD+), which was introduced under the UNFCCC. Both conventions recognised that REDD+ contributes to climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation through its safeguard system. However, it was primarily the CBD secretariat that outlined the potential benefits of REDD+ for biodiversity and indigenous peoples and local communities; demonstrated the importance of biodiversity and indigenous and local community co-benefits for the long-term success of REDD+; and outlined possible risks of REDD+ for biodiversity and indigenous peoples and local communities (**Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity & GIZ, 2011**). Although the REDD+ framework has been thoroughly discussed under the UNFCCC, there has been little discussion of the links between REDD+ and indigenous peoples and local communities.

Despite wide acknowledgement that non-state actors and sub-national-level authorities need to play a significant role in the UNFCCC and CBD processes, challenges remain for their proper engagement and the application of joint approaches. These include limited opportunities for communities and local governments to engage and effectively influence the official processes through their technical and ancestral knowledge and capacities; insufficient funding to participate on a sustained basis; stakeholder engagement processes lacking coordination, permanency, and consistency; and the intermittent and insufficiently active participation of the private sector (**Phillips, 2018; Machado Granziera & Gomez, 2019**). These flaws point to an underdeveloped and flawed practice of vertical—but also horizontal—integration in multilateral processes, as well as to the challenge for civil society actors to stay connected to and visible in these time-consuming and extensive international climate governance processes.





New Pathways for Sub-National Actors in Advancing Climate and Biodiversity Goals

In long-term, strategic, negotiated processes like the CBD and the UNFCCC, the establishment of partnerships between state and non-state actors at all levels plays a fundamental role. As the principles for locally led adaptation developed by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and other organisations point out: “Given the right resources, partnerships, information, voice and agency, local people offer huge untapped resilience-building potential to deliver more context-specific, coherent, accountable, democratic, agile, diverse and cost-effective adaptation solutions” (Soanes et al., 2021, p. 4).

Resting on the notion of partnerships and collaboration as underlying principles, Table 1 identifies five pathways for sub-national actors to gain further prominence in multilateral negotiation processes. Success that is shared by multiple stakeholders requires efforts not only by sub-national actors, but also by national and supranational ones—who themselves have much to gain from an enhanced role by state and non-state players.

Table 1. Increasing the influence of sub-national governments and local communities: Pathways, challenges, opportunities, and new roles

Pathway	Challenges	Opportunities	Opportunities for enhancing sub-national actors' roles and mandates
Recognising knowledge, culture, and values	The politics affecting climate and biodiversity tend to be culture blind and disregard the values and visions of marginalised groups, such as indigenous peoples (Ulloa, 2018). Indigenous peoples and local communities are under-represented in climate policy and the development of NbS (Townsend et al., 2020).	Foster dialogue with communities and institutions where new climate and biodiversity framings and discourses are welcome, for example, assessing a landscape's value beyond its productivity by recognising its links to people's culture and identity.	Refuel dialogue processes with newly acquired mandates or influence vis-à-vis negotiation streams (e. g., revamp Talanoa dialogues; encourage meaningful non-party stakeholder engagement in the Global Stocktake's technical assessment process; multi-stakeholder rounds in the Edinburgh process; the Glasgow Climate Pact), acknowledging the need for the inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities as a standard criterion for implementation.
Devolving power and funding to the local and community levels	Economic and political elites can co-opt NbS and climate agendas to protect their own interests, thus limiting the contribution of these initiatives to the SDGs (van der Jagt et al., 2021). The starting point for discussions—both in multilateral negotiations and nationally—often assumes a pre-existing vision that has been set by the Global North.	A reversal of historical injustices and persistent post-colonial approaches can be initiated through a devolution of mandates in national and multilateral processes to indigenous peoples and local communities and other marginalised groups. Capacity strengthening of local and national actors helps ensure their interactions are constructive and fruitful.	Enable protagonist roles for formal and informal organisations representing local communities while encouraging influential actors to promote the principle of subsidiarity (Soanes et al., 2021) in national prioritisation exercises and in multilateral negotiations.

Pathway	Challenges	Opportunities	Opportunities for enhancing sub-national actors' roles and mandates
Welcoming a broader vision of change	Protecting and nurturing the existing narratives of adaptation can ignore the historical and political notions of environmental risk whilst oversimplifying the concerns and strategies of indigenous peoples and local communities (Rubio C., 2018).	Use NbS and adaptation actions as vehicles for redesigning outcomes and aligning national strategies with indigenous peoples and local communities' concepts of sustainable development in a fair negotiation process and acknowledging the knowledge and skills of all involved.	Innovative participatory and co-creative processes of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating adaptation and biodiversity measures can overcome political and behavioural barriers to successful policy implementation (Kumar et al., 2020).
Being open to novel organisational thinking	In the context of adaptation and NbS, Jaakson (2010, p. 172) posits that “the more the values statement affects a stakeholder group, the more engagement this particular group deserves” is woefully underserved. This gap demands a redrawing of both public and private sector organisations' relationships with users / stakeholders.	Promote new management models of organisations where civil society and the private sector have room to innovate, evolve, and quickly respond to challenges; and where solutions to multi-level governance and alignment are proactively sought (Amend, 2019). Exploring these new models through NbS would be especially timely and relevant.	There's ample evidence showing that stakeholder engagement processes that genuinely pursue collaboration and co-creation lead to an increased acceptance of NbS / climate initiatives, as well as their ownership by local groups. Accountability in governance can be further promoted through collaboration with independent third-party organisations (Coleman et al., 2019).

Pathway	Challenges	Opportunities	Opportunities for enhancing sub-national actors' roles and mandates
Transforming relations between scales and actors	Both the Edinburgh Declaration (2020) and the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action (2015) are examples of official positions recognising the need for transformational change in order to attain biodiversity and climate goals and contain the most devastating effects of these crises. Still, transformational initiatives remain rare exceptions.	While the practice of transformation remains elusive, there are increasing calls from civil society organisations and even some government agencies to shift paradigms toward more transformational approaches. Arguably, there is increasing buy-in by institutions in positions of power to promote transformational change.	Transformational shifts in power relations that empower indigenous peoples and local communities and sub-national authorities can result from inclusive multistakeholder dialogues (Morchain et al., 2019). Transforming stakeholder roles in this way can help reorganise governance structure and reorient social relations (Few et al., 2017).

With the aim to further bridge theory and practice, each of the five pathways identified above is illustrated with an example.

- ▶ **Recognising knowledge, culture, and values:** Embedding climate and biodiversity work in cultural realities is a step toward acknowledging the social foundation required from these actions and the role that people, not least indigenous peoples and local communities, should play in defining and benefiting from them. In Colombia's Sierra Nevada de Santa María, the preferred model for managing climate change impacts of the four more populous groups of

indigenous peoples rests on self-determination and territorial autonomy. In effect, these principles constitute a cultural and spiritual approach to adapting to climate and environmental change—elements that are insufficiently represented in official strategies and policies (**Ulloa, 2018**). Recognising the plurality of perspectives in responding to climate change and managing the territory is an important step toward advancing sustainability goals harmoniously and enriching the knowledge of actors around the sometimes-competing, sometimes-reinforcing priorities of development.

- ▶ **Devolving power and funding to the local level and communities:** Empowering communities and local actors in climate and biodiversity processes that affect them directly does not mean full devolution of decision-making to the local level. Shared governance by a combination of actors demands negotiation, compromise, and consensus. One example of this is a collaboration between civil society, non-governmental organisations, government officials, and researchers in Botswana. These stakeholders collaborated in multi-day workshops at the sub-national level (district and sub-district) to identify and prioritise climate and development risks and needs, thus providing a channel for local and disenfranchised populations to communicate with sub-national officials and decision-makers—and to be seen, heard, and recognised. The success of these pilot workshops led the national government to demand the replication of the process in all the country's districts, thus promoting a closer relationship between actors from the national to local levels in forwarding the development and climate adaptation agendas ([International Development Research Centre, 2020](#)).

When devolution is indeed achieved, it is important for local authorities to avoid the common mistake of overly concentrating their efforts on operational and administrative tasks at the expense of attending to socio-cultural and ecological aspects: this can undermine effective multi-level governance and citizens' expectations regarding the newly gained powers at the local level ([Ziervogel et al., 2019](#)).

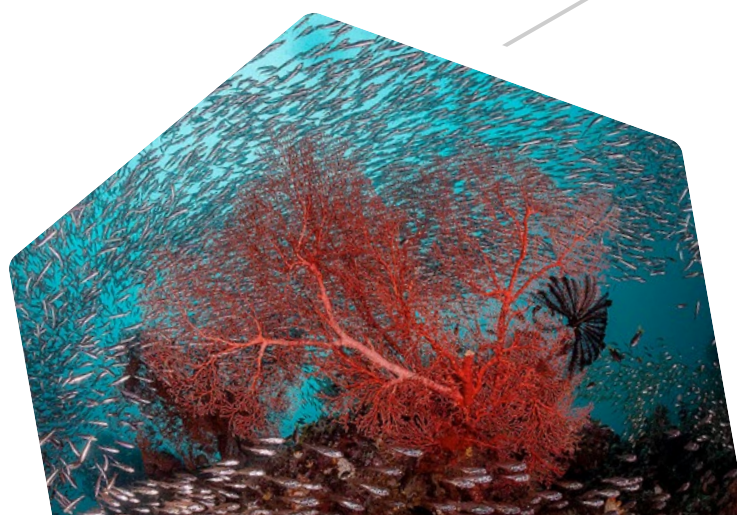
Such devolution of power can enable local stakeholders to act with a certain degree of independence and self-determination, partly through more direct access to financial resources for undertaking climate and biodiversity action. This exercise—which helps strengthen democratic principles—requires addressing any possible gaps in local governments' and local actors' capacity to administer these funds / grants, to ensure their proper management. Indeed, it is important to recognise corruption as a possible threat to effective multi-level governance, and to sustainable development more broadly. The occurrence of corruption has been found to jeopardise the ability of countries to adapt to climate change, while also deterring investments in NbS ([Rahman, 2018](#); [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, 2019](#)). On the other hand, the perception of “good,” transparent governance can have an even stronger positive effect in promoting the implementation of development-oriented activities (like conservation) than the level of wealth of the country ([Baynham-Herd et al., 2018](#)). In Ghana, for instance, district assemblies in the water sector have been instrumental in supporting a consultative planning process and in managing external funds ([Ziervogel et al., 2019](#)).

In other words, good governance and sound financial management positively reinforce the appetite of local actors, government funders, and private investors for supporting climate / biodiversity projects.

- ▶ **Welcoming a broader vision of change:** A common flaw of NbS projects is their failure to sufficiently explore their potential contribution to human well-being; centring instead mostly on conservation benefits (Dick et al., 2020). Climate adaptation initiatives, similarly, have tended to prioritise a narrow technical and economic focus, downplaying broader social implications and vulnerabilities, as well as the importance of multi-level governance (Eriksen et al., 2021). Both framings call for a broader vision of the desired change so that they are more inclusive of the perspectives and objectives of local actors.

Historically, in the Tacaná Volcano area at the Guatemalan–Mexican border, conservation and adaptation priorities have overridden and understated social and well-being objectives, ignoring local politics and struggles, and weakening local networks and cohesion (Ruiz de Oña Plaza, 2018). Recognising these social issues, the lack of political coordination, environmental degradation, and climate risks, a project of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and partners tackled the governance of water resources in that area **holistically**: by championing a locally driven approach to water management and to exploring new livelihood opportunities; by enhancing the availability of information and knowledge among actors; and by improving local environmental health. Their approach revealed the benefits of integrating local and national perspectives and interests, such as working with local water management institutions to improve integrated water resource management initiatives, promote social cohesion, and help integrate local and sub-national efforts on adaptation and conservation (Cohen-Shacham et al., 2016).

- ▶ **Being open to novel organisational thinking:** In the context of carefully structured and heavy-footed multilateral processes like those run by the CBD and the UNFCCC, it is helpful to introduce creative spaces, whether formal or informal. Parallel to the UNFCCC, the Development & Climate Days (IIED, 2021) have been running for 18 years alongside the COPs—and often physically in the room next door—to inject innovative ideas into the process that often challenge conventional approaches to development and the positioning and setting of agendas of UN bodies. In the past, the UNFCCC COPs have been criticised as “no longer fit for purpose,” with IIED’s Saleemul Huq adding that “we need to reverse the way these big events are run—it is the practitioners, the doers, who must take pride of place” (IIED, 2016). Initiatives like **Development & Climate Days** or the **COP 26 Coalition** can create momentum and push negotiators and other stakeholders to think outside of the box when encountering wicked, complex problems like climate change, environmental degradation, or biodiversity loss. This type of event often does this through the inclusion of currently absent voices and knowledge or of literature (e.g., grey literature) that is disregarded from official negotiations.



- **Transforming relations between scales and actors:** The outcomes sought by processes like the CBD's and UNFCCC's demand a level of inclusivity and representation that existing governance structures and power dynamics often cannot, on their own, deliver. Instead, disruption and transformation in approaches and actions, and a genuine inclusion of marginalised groups, are necessary to reduce people's vulnerability and address the underlying causes of these crises (Eriksen et al., 2021). A collaboration in Costa Rica, for example, brought the Ministry of

Environment and Energy, four official scientific bodies, the Museum of Art and Contemporary Design, and eight artists into a collaboration that sought to engage citizens in the government's climate strategies and actions through exposure to the arts (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2021). This project may be seen as a transformation or disruption of the typical approaches to stakeholder engagement, while showing that such transformation can come in many forms and need not always be drastic or "revolutionary."

CASE STUDY

PERU'S INDIGENOUS CLIMATE PLATFORM

In 2020, Peru enshrined into law the Indigenous Climate Platform (Plataforma de Pueblos Indígenas para enfrentar el Cambio Climático), granting civil society organisations representing indigenous peoples access to top-level climate action planning in national government, the High-Level Commission on Climate Change. This step makes Peru a world leader in advancing indigenous peoples' rights. The Platform aims to "manage, articulate, exchange, systematise, disseminate and monitor [Indigenous People's] proposals for adaptation and mitigation measures for indigenous or native peoples, as well as their traditional and ancestral knowledge, practices and knowledge on climate change that contribute to the comprehensive management of climate change" (Ministerio del Ambiente, 2020).

As such, the Platform takes a significant step forward toward rightfully reflecting indigenous People's views in climate policy and action and toward recognising indigenous peoples' rights

over the landscape—how it is defined, understood, and managed. Some argue, however, that the Platform falls short of its potential by not giving indigenous peoples' organisations the mandate or the ability to influence adaptation decision-making.

This shortcoming may hinder the potential for change in the Platform, as one of the seven indigenous organisations explained: "From the indigenous vision, you cannot separate the singular components from the territory as a whole. We cannot think of water without the forest, without the hills, without the animals, without the medicinal plants. It is precisely this knowledge and vision that must be fully included in public policy proposals related to climate change" (ONAMIAP, 2020).

Peru's experience will soon offer lessons for other countries on bridging climate action with the diverse visions, cultures, values, and sources of knowledge of the people it is home to.

Attaining Joint Climate and Biodiversity Goals Through Multi-level Governance

To conclude, this section highlights opportunities that aim to help party delegates of both the CBD and the UNFCCC processes strengthen and enhance the joint implementation of biodiversity and climate goals at sub-national and local levels.

Adopt a multi-level coordination approach to engage all levels of governance in the planning and implementation of the global climate and biodiversity agendas.

Closer alignment of the global climate and biodiversity agendas and related policy processes is often driven by national-level governments. However, sub-national and local actors play essential roles because firm, decisive local actions are key for the successful implementation of the global agendas. National governments should design a common working framework that enables a participative process and coordinates closely with lower levels of authority to identify common challenges, set priorities, align policies and actions, and—ideally—mobilise and pool resources. For this purpose, countries should strengthen mechanisms for coordination between levels of government, aiming to act in those policy areas where joint planning and implementation are essential. This is especially important because approaches like NbS that jointly address climate change and biodiversity loss often involve ecosystems that transcend jurisdictional boundaries and regional cooperation could help maximise results for people and ecosystems.

Create incentives and build capacity to strengthen cross-government collaboration and joint outputs.

Establishing a formal body for coordination does not necessarily guarantee inclusive and cohesive collaboration among levels of government. To change dominant paradigms and hierarchies, multiple efforts need to be undertaken. Aside from the assignment of a clear mandate for multi-level governance, coordination and exchange need to be incentivised, for example, through shared responsibilities among several actors that can lead to greater cooperation and more coherent outputs. Moreover, capacity-building initiatives play an important role in this regard, as do management incentives for cooperation and setting joint goals for cooperating divisions across government and institutions. Building awareness and attention about new issues and their overlaps (i.e., global agendas, biodiversity, adaptation to climate change) inside national government and indigenous peoples and local communities and promoting coherence via dialogue are critical for creating joint policy outputs.

Identify and strengthen linkages and synergies between climate change and biodiversity policy and planning processes to maximise impact, avoid duplication, and prevent policies from undermining each other.

To enhance joint and effective implementation of biodiversity and climate change at sub-national levels, national climate and biodiversity policies need to be coordinated and consistent. The very real links between climate change and biodiversity mean that there is great potential for policies—and the programmes and projects they inform—to achieve multiple objectives. There is also the potential risk for these efforts to have unintended negative impacts on other objectives. Policy mapping can be an efficient way to identify synergies, address trade-offs, and create opportunities for integration. For example, climate change policy development should support the recognition of NBSAPs content in national mitigation and adaptation policies, and the recognition of mitigation and adaptation policies and objectives in the development of NBSAPs, whereas National Adaptation Plans should acknowledge and align with conservation strategies. Similarly, environmental impact assessments can be integrated into the design of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects and policies—and vice versa. This will assist planners, decision-makers, and all stakeholders to identify and mitigate potentially harmful environmental and social impacts while enhancing positive benefits such as carbon storage and biodiversity conservation.

Ensure high-level political commitment and promote collective responsibility for implementing the climate and biodiversity agendas.

Greater integration of climate change and biodiversity protection begins with clear and publicly expressed—and demonstrated—political commitment, in which all levels of government are required to support high-level decisions. Political commitment is essential for prioritising policy objectives and must be matched with resources and additional capacity. Further, promoting collective responsibility and incentives for planning and implementation will ensure that sub-national and local levels are aware of their share of responsibility and have a legitimate voice in the process. It is essential that high-level goals are underpinned by political consensus and a clear allocation of quantifiable responsibilities for different actors that spell out measures and goals that contribute to the agreed collective objectives. Importantly, resources and skills need to be in line with sub-national actors' responsibilities.



Build a trustful and enabling work environment to facilitate dialogue and increase mutual understanding for joint climate and biodiversity planning processes.

Actors involved in these coordination mechanisms must build a trustful and enabling work environment. This cannot be ordered or materialised from one day to the next. It is an ongoing process that takes time and input from every member of the group. So-called “ambassadors” or “champions” who bring the right people to the table are important for building mutual understanding and facilitating dialogue. Finding common ground and consensus often requires a profound understanding of group dynamics and leadership that promotes the creation of joint narratives and bridges different sector-specific views into one. For example, reassessing with indigenous peoples and local communities how the official climate and biodiversity goals resonate (or do not) with their own goals and their perspectives on social justice could generate new ideas and responses. For this reason, it is important to invite input from local stakeholders into official processes and remain open-minded about their framings (e.g., their relation to nature and its non-human elements, or their visions of a desirable future).

The choice around the use of language is also relevant in building trust and partnerships. Recognising that stakeholders use different terms and language (and that this can create barriers to collaboration), a facilitated process that translates and builds a common language can help set up a strong foundation for joint work.

Devolve power and funding to the local level and communities and prioritise activities that meet multiple objectives.

Organisations representing local governments and indigenous peoples and local communities tend to lack the financial and political weight needed to meaningfully influence national governance processes. National and multilateral actors must acknowledge the shortcomings in mandates and capabilities of institutions promoting local-level representation in the climate and biodiversity spaces. Doing so can make the multi-level governance process more effective and inclusive. In devolving funding to local levels, prioritise funding actions that are mutually supportive of climate and biodiversity goals and that meet multiple objectives. This ensures efficient use of limited resources. For bilaterally and multilaterally funded initiatives, demand a greater role for sub-national and indigenous peoples and local communities in the identification and design stage. This should enhance their power to promote the change *they* want to see.

In moving forward and jointly pursuing the objectives of biodiversity conservation and climate change and those of local state and non-state actors, it is necessary to give sub-national stakeholders a seat at the table and recognise them as equals. Attaining success at the multilateral level necessitates local actors feeling that they, too, have improved their position through their contribution in designing and implementing these global agreements.


Multilateral processes need local actors, and the local actor needs multilateral processes; one needs the other—and one will not be achieved without a genuine, equal partnership with the other.

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