

Transformative Change for Global Biodiversity: the Role of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

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This briefing note introduces some of the lessons, barriers, entry points for action, themes, and issues related to the challenge of ensuring that women, girls, Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and marginalised groups are at the heart of efforts to tackle the global biodiversity crisis.

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Acronyms

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
FPIC	Free, prior, and informed consent
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GBV	Gender-based violence
GBFF	Global Biodiversity Framework Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and local communities
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Limitations of this report

This study is not a comprehensive review of the evidence, but is intended to assist as a starting point for discussion. The majority of evidence covered in this review focused on the roles of women, girls, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in biodiversity action. Other characteristics that influence exclusion including ethnicity, disability, age, wealth, education or language are not covered in detail in this review, due to limited time and available evidence, but should be considered as part of an intersectional approach.

A note on terminology

This report refers to ‘Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs)’, adopting terminology that is widely used by international organisations and conventions such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), which refers to IPLCs as ‘typically, ethnic groups who are descended from and identify with the original inhabitants of a given region, in contrast to groups that have settled, occupied or colonized the area more recently’ (IPBES, 2022, p. 541).

Session 1: Scene setting: why is this a critical issue?

Biodiversity conservation initiatives are more likely to produce positive, sustainable outcomes for the environment and for society if they are planned, designed, and implemented with the participation of people from all segments of society who may be affected or involved. Initiatives are also more likely to be just, fair, equitable, and to protect the rights of all members of society if they are developed with participation and input from all members of society.

Many groups within society, however, are disadvantaged in their ability to participate fully in decision-making processes and implementation. People may be marginalised because of gender, ethnicity, disability, age, wealth, education, language, other characteristics, or combinations of characteristics.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) calls for a ‘whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach’ incorporating the rights, knowledge, contributions, and values of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women and girls, and ‘all actors of society’ (CBD, 2022c, para. 7). Similarly, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) considers ‘justice and inclusion’ to be one of eight ‘leverage points’ for achieving transformative change (IPBES, 2019, pp. 17, 40).

Experience from past action on biodiversity has produced a variety of lessons about how well various approaches have worked to promote inclusive and transformative change, including:

- Increasing women’s participation in decision-making roles has been associated with positive environmental outcomes in many studies. Mechanisms for full and effective participation by Indigenous Peoples and local communities in biodiversity decision-making processes at the national and local levels are still lacking in most countries, despite being recognised in global commitments.
- Community management of land and forest resources contributes significantly to positive biodiversity outcomes and sustainable resource use. Community fisheries management has also been shown to produce positive environmental outcomes generally, but few studies have focused on biodiversity.
- Community-based interventions to combat illegal wildlife trade can complement formal law enforcement efforts if local people have a motivation (whether financial or non-financial) to protect wildlife.
- Sustaining food production while enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of nature are complementary and interdependent goals that can be advanced through sustainable agriculture and support for Indigenous Peoples’ traditional food systems.
- Secure land tenure – access to and ownership or control of land – incentivises and supports sustainable land management practices.
- Women and Indigenous Peoples and local communities often have extensive and valuable knowledge and experience about biodiversity, ecology, sustainable

practices, environmental management, and interdependencies between communities and ecosystems.

- Gender-disaggregated data are important for designing evidence-based policies, tracking the effectiveness of interventions, mobilising gender-responsive financing, and monitoring implementation and progress towards goals and targets
- When local communities increase their income through sustainable natural resource management, they become more likely to safeguard the biodiversity and ecosystem services that underpin those income streams.
- A human rights-based approach can provide a legal framework for advancing the interests of marginalised groups within the context of action on biodiversity.

Many barriers impede women, girls, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities from fully participating in, being valued in, and benefiting from global and local biodiversity and conservation efforts. Some of the most significant of these barriers are:

- Deep-rooted social and cultural norms and power structures create significant barriers for women, girls, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and other marginalised groups when it comes to decision-making power and agency.
- Legal rights to own and control land and other property are weak or absent for many women globally. Similarly, Indigenous Peoples also lack formal recognition of land rights in many jurisdictions and are often at risk of encroachment, displacement, and dispossession by states or corporations.
- Gender-based violence, rooted in discriminatory gender norms, remains an important problem for many women globally and is systematically used to protect existing privileges around natural resources and to maintain power imbalances.
- A lack of data disaggregated by age, sex, ethnicity, and other characteristics is a major constraint on understanding how women, girls, Indigenous Peoples and local communities intersect with biodiversity.
- Knowledge, experiences, and values held by women, girls, Indigenous Peoples and local communities can offer valuable insights for biodiversity conservation but are often not recognised, valued, or drawn upon in official governance processes.
- Discrimination is complex and intersectional – intensified and compounded by the interaction of multiple factors including education, age, disability, wealth, and more. The effect of these interacting vulnerabilities is often not taken into account, which can exacerbate their impacts.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is a global agreement to halt and reverse biodiversity loss worldwide, with four overarching goals to be achieved by 2050 and 23 individual targets to be achieved by 2030. Two of the Framework’s targets (22 and 23) focus on inclusive participation and gender equality, and various organisations have suggested potential entry points for efforts to support their implementation, including:

- Developing clear, specific, measurable, and realistic targets and indicators;
- Strengthening monitoring, reporting, and accountability processes;

- Ensuring that women and Indigenous Peoples and local communities participate and take leadership roles in developing, updating, and implementing National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans;
- Incorporating women's, Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' knowledge;
- Mainstreaming gender in National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans;
- Linking with other national policies and working across government; and
- Developing synergies with other international conventions.

Enhancing biodiversity finance provision is an enabling factor for promoting transformative change, alongside attention to systematic structural inequalities which measure access to financing and equitable benefits distribution. While approaches to biodiversity finance are diverse, some key barriers and opportunities for inclusive finance provision include:

- Increasing the diversity of funding sources, including mobilising private sector investment.
- Improving the coordination and consistency of financial flows and policy commitments, noting that biodiversity outcomes take time to achieve and need stable, long-term support.
- Increasing direct investment and reducing intermediaries in biodiversity financing, as at present, funding which reaches Indigenous Peoples and local communities, or which addresses the intersections of biodiversity, climate change, and gender equality, is a marginal fraction of total international development assistance provision.
- Simplifying funding application processes and providing consistent, long-term investment to enhance direct access to financing for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to enable the pursuit of longer-term biodiversity objectives, reduce transaction costs, and enable local capacity development to redress implementation barriers and data gaps.
- Aligning finance with strong metrics for evaluating and promoting gender inclusivity and addressing structural barriers to women's full participation in governance, such as mainstreaming gender considerations in biodiversity planning, decision-making, development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), implementation, and monitoring.
- Non-market approaches including redressing perverse incentives driving biodiversity loss, including regulatory reform and redirecting public subsidies for activities which undercut the CBD, addressing tax evasion by multinational corporations to increase public financing for biodiversity, and reforming debt repayments and austerity measures, such as through debt-for-nature swaps.

Session 2: Learning from inclusive and transformative biodiversity action

Brian Lucas

Experience from past action on biodiversity has produced lessons about how well various approaches have worked to promote inclusive and transformative change. The following is a brief overview of some of the lessons that have emerged about approaches to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of women, girls, Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and marginalised groups in biodiversity action. It is not a comprehensive review of the evidence, but is intended to assist as a starting point for discussion.

Inclusive representation in biodiversity decision-making processes

There is significant evidence that increasing women's involvement in decision-making roles has been associated with positive environmental outcomes. The presence of women in local forest management groups in cases in India and Nepal, for example, contributed to stricter and more sustainable rules on resource extraction; greater compliance, transparency and accountability; and better conflict resolution (Leisher et al., 2016, pp. 1, 8, and appendix 4; Shellock & Northrop, 2024, p. 8). Global studies have also shown positive environmental outcomes arising from that increasing the representation of women in positions of authority, including:

- Countries with a higher proportion of women in parliament and/or women in ministerial government positions designate more protected land area per capita (observed in a study of 90 countries between 2001-2004) (Nugent & Shandra, 2009).
- A higher proportion of women in parliament contributes to increased forest cover (reduced deforestation) when the proportion of female legislators exceeds 38% (observed across 177 countries, 1990-2015) (Salahodjaev & Jarilkapova, 2020).
- Women's political empowerment, as measured by an index combining political participation, civil liberties and civil society participation, is associated with long-term reductions in CO₂ emissions (72 countries from 1971-2012) (Lv & Deng, 2019).

Governments can facilitate women's contributions to biodiversity processes by ensuring that women hold leadership positions in governance bodies, providing capacity-building opportunities, accommodating language needs and organising meetings at convenient times and locations, making childcare available, and providing financial reimbursement for time away from work or other responsibilities (UNDP, 2024b, p. 26, 2024a, p. 6). Women's participation is most effective when they reach a 'critical mass' of at least one quarter to one third of a group, which has been achieved in some cases through gender quotas or mandates (Agarwal, 2015; Canpolat et al., 2022, p. 25; Larson et al., 2015, p. 45). Women and girls should be involved in processes such as the development and revision of NBSAPs from the earliest stages (Booker et al., 2022b, p. 10) through mechanisms such as women's groups, gender institutions, local governments, community organisations, gender-biodiversity focal points, gender experts, and groups representing Indigenous Peoples and local communities (UNDP, 2024b, p. 26, 2024a, p. 6).

Mechanisms for full and effective participation by Indigenous Peoples and local communities in biodiversity decision-making processes at the national and local levels are still lacking in most countries (Forest Peoples Programme, 2020, p. 27).

Inclusive approaches to environmental governance using broad stakeholder engagement should recognise, respect, and include the knowledge, innovations, practices, institutions, value systems, and interests of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and enable their participation (IPBES, 2019, p. 44). Participation can be supported by national recognition for land tenure, access and rights, and where the principle of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is followed (IPBES, 2019, p. 44). Advocates for Indigenous Peoples and local communities recommend that governments should: establish mechanisms to enable participation in national strategies and action plans; mainstream traditional knowledge and customary practices; increase institutional support and direct, long-term funding; strengthen links between diverse knowledge systems in monitoring and reporting; generate disaggregated data on the status of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, youth and marginalised groups; and integrate robust environmental, social and cultural safeguards and measures in resource mobilisation processes (Forest Peoples Programme, 2020, p. 27).

Community forest management

Community management of land and forest resources contributes significantly to positive biodiversity outcomes and sustainable resource use. Community participation can mean decentralising responsibility from central governments to local stakeholders, including community representation in forest management bodies, or engaging communities in monitoring management arrangements and reporting on land use (Gonzalez Parrao et al., 2024, p. 8). A systematic literature review covering 169 publications found that when Indigenous Peoples and local communities have greater control over conservation efforts, environmental and social outcomes are significantly more positive than in cases of externally controlled conservation (Dawson et al., 2021). Across Latin America and the Caribbean, forests in Indigenous Peoples' territories have been much better conserved (with lower deforestation rates and less forest fragmentation) than other forests, and in many cases Indigenous Peoples' territories have provided the same or better protection as non-Indigenous officially protected areas (FAO & FILAC, 2021, pp. 27–29). This is especially notable where Indigenous Peoples and local communities hold secure governance rights over territory (see *land tenure*, below). Some studies, however, have noted that community management initiatives are context-dependent (notably including dependence on local livelihoods) and are not always successful, and that most evaluations have focused on economic benefits rather than biodiversity outcomes so the evidence for the former is stronger (Sayer et al., 2017, pp. 4–5). Factors that can contribute to successful local forest management with positive conservation outcomes include: clear designation of rights, responsibilities, and environmental objectives; formal recognition of land rights; designation of formal protected areas; legally-mandated institutions to oversee arrangements; a neutral process for resolving conflicts; effective mechanisms to compensate local communities when biodiversity measures conflict local resource use; clarity on how locally-managed areas interact with broader landscape management plans; external incentives such as payment for ecosystem services; effective assessment, monitoring, and adaptive management processes; support for traditional cultural practices, lifestyles, knowledge, and belief

systems; low profitability of agriculture; limited accessibility; and limited access to capital and labour (FAO & FILAC, 2021, pp. 33–51; Sayer et al., 2017, p. 6).

Community fisheries management

Community fisheries management generally produces positive environmental outcomes, but few studies have focused on evaluating biodiversity impacts, with most being more concerned with the size and sustainability of fish harvests. One systematic literature review examined 65 studies of community-based management of freshwater fisheries, and found that various positive environmental outcomes were reported by half (49%) of the studies, but only 11 of the studies reported outcomes related to biodiversity (Karres et al., 2022, p. 5). Another review which looked at 70 studies of co-managed¹ small-scale fisheries similarly found that ecological outcomes were reported by 57% of the studies reviewed, and that co-management led to increases in the abundance and habitat of species, fish catches, and adaptive capacity (d'Armengol et al., 2018, p. 212). One example of a case study of fisheries management committees in Bangladesh (one gender-balanced, one male-led, and one women-led) found that all three groups reported increases in species diversity and quantities of fish catches, and reported high acceptance and compliance with fishing limits in the mixed and women-led cases (Sultana & Thompson, 2008, p. 66).

There is evidence that women's participation in fisheries management activities has led to positive environmental outcomes (Chambon et al., 2023, p. 15). For example, in Vanuatu, a coral gardening project trained women to take on responsibilities for collecting coral fragments to create new coral beds and guide tourists; coral fragments collected by women were found to have a 75% survival rate, while those handled by men had only a 55% survival rate, and the new coral beds have provided new habitats for fish and enhanced coastline protection from waves and cyclones (Dazé & Terton, 2021, p. 25). In the Philippines, an all-woman volunteer organisation serves guards a former fishing ground that is now a marine protected area and eco-tourism destination, enforcing rules in the marine protected area and checking the cargoes of incoming fishing boats; the protected area experienced a 24% increase in fish biomass by the end of the training programme (USAID, 2017).

Community-based approaches to combating illegal wildlife trade

Community-based interventions to combat illegal wildlife trade 'can complement formal law enforcement efforts if local people have a motivation (whether financial or non-financial) to protect wildlife' (Cooney et al. 2017, cited in Roe & Booker, 2019, p. 9). Types of approaches that have been used include involving local communities in enforcement, creating realistic incentives for communities to engage in conservation, mitigating human-wildlife conflict, developing diversified non-wildlife-based livelihoods, and education and awareness-raising (Cooney et al., 2018, p. 10; Roe & Booker, 2019, p. 7; Seager, 2021, pp. 13, 38). However, there is a lack of robust and independent monitoring and evaluation of these approaches, so it is difficult to say with confidence how effective these approaches are: for example, one review of 50 initiatives found that only 19 reported

¹ Co-management involves a process for joint management of fisheries by direct users, governments and other actors; it is considered to be a participatory management model that can support both conservation and sustainable resource use objectives (d'Armengol et al., 2018, p. 212).

on their effectiveness on poaching or on wildlife populations, and found no link between reported effectiveness and the community engagement strategies employed (Roe & Booker, 2019, p. 7); another review of 115 case studies similarly did not find any connection between types of strategies and effectiveness (Wilson-Holt & Roe, 2021, p. 3).

Including women in anti-poaching enforcement activities may offer some advantages compared with male-only teams. Women are under-represented in front-line wildlife protection work, comprising between 3% and 11% of the ranger workforce worldwide (Graham, 2022, p. 37; Seager, 2021, p. 46). There are some indications that women-only or mixed-gender enforcement teams may have advantages over male-only teams (which are the norm in most countries) in engaging positively with poachers; negotiating, de-escalating and resolving conflict; reducing use of force; searching and questioning female suspects; reducing corruption; drawing on diverse experiences gained through different traditional gender roles; and liaising with local communities, particularly in building relationships with women and youth (Graham, 2022, pp. 37–40; Seager, 2021, pp. 50–51; Seager et al., 2021, p. 208). A small number of women-only anti-poaching units in Africa stand out as particularly notable examples of women’s empowerment, including:

- The *Black Mambas* in South Africa were established to work with impoverished local communities in and around the Balule Nature Reserve, providing a visible deterrent to poachers, gathering intelligence, and engaging with communities (Graham, 2022, p. 39; Hübschle & Shearing, 2018, pp. 28–29).
- *Team Lioness* in Kenya recruits women from Maasai communities in and around Amboseli National Park to work in specialised units within a larger ranger organisation in roles that consist largely of working with communities and intelligence-gathering (IFAW, 2023; Mahugu, 2023; Smith, 2020).
- *Akashinga*, with more than 500 personnel operating in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Botswana, takes a more aggressive approach to enforcement: members receive paramilitary-style training, are armed with rifles, and directly confront and arrest poachers (Akashinga, 2023; Graham, 2022, p. 38; Nuwer, 2018).

These groups report significant contributions to reducing poaching in the areas where they operate, but there does not yet appear to be high-quality independent evidence of their conservation impacts (Hübschle & Shearing, 2018, p. 30; Mkono et al., 2023, p. 1101).

Sustainable agriculture

Sustaining food production and enhancing biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources are ‘complementary and interdependent goals that can be advanced through sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and livestock systems, the safeguarding of native species, varieties, breeds and habitats, and ecological restoration’ (IPBES, 2019, p. 18). The modern global food system, characterised by conversion of natural ecosystems for crop production or pasture, intensive production, heavy use of external inputs, and an emphasis on mass production at low cost, is the primary driver of global biodiversity loss (Benton et al., 2021, p. 2; WWF, 2021, p. 5). Approaches to reducing and reversing this biodiversity loss include protecting existing natural habitat from conversion to agriculture, restoring native ecosystems on degraded land, farming in a more nature-friendly and biodiversity-supporting way with limited use of

inputs and replacing monoculture with polyculture farming practices, changing dietary patterns towards more plant-based alternatives, and reducing food waste (Benton et al., 2021, p. 2; WWF, 2021, p. 6). Indigenous Peoples' traditional food systems tend to be more sustainable and may offer lessons for other farmers; these systems derive from long experience sustaining food production under conditions of environmental change, incorporate a diversity of crops and livestock that are resilient, well-adapted to local conditions, require few external inputs, and embed sustainable agroecological and regenerative practices underpinned by traditional cultural values and beliefs (Swiderska et al., 2022, p. 2). Women have an important role in promoting and adopting sustainable agricultural practices, as they often have primary responsibility for meeting their families' food and health needs and producing staple crops which make up the majority of food intake, and are often in charge of the selection, improvement, and adaptation of plant varieties (OECD, 2020, p. 6). Studies in Tanzania and India, for example, found that women's control of farm resources and participation in decision-making were important factors determining the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices (Aryal et al., 2020; Kurgat et al. 2020, cited in IFC, 2023, p. 9).

Land tenure

There is significant evidence that secure access to and control of land incentivises and supports sustainable land management practices. Secure land tenure is widely recognised as being important for climate change mitigation and adaptation, soil conservation, managing land degradation and desertification, and managing forests (Livingstone & Jenkins, 2021, p. 25; Shukla et al., 2019, pp. 51–55, 70). When smallholder farmers have secure rights to land, they are more likely to preserve the soil, plant trees and protect forests, and countries with more secure land rights tend to have lower rates of deforestation (UNCCCD, 2019, p. 6). Multiple studies have shown that strengthening security of land tenure for women contributes to long-term productive and environmentally beneficial investments, including sustainable land use practices, soil and water conservation, tree planting, carbon sequestration, and livelihood management strategies that build adaptive capacity (Hurlburt et al., 2019, p. 719; Landesa, 2023, pp. 3–4; Livingstone & Jenkins, 2021, p. 25; Shukla et al., 2019, p. 43). Similarly, where Indigenous Peoples and local communities hold secure tenure and governance rights over territories, lower rates of deforestation and soil degradation, and better protection of biodiversity and ecosystem functions, are generally observed (FAO & FILAC, 2021, pp. 39–40; Forest Peoples Programme, 2020, p. 13; Robinson et al., 2014; Young, 2024, p. 19). Funding to secure and protect Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' tenure and forest management has been described as one of the most effective means of protecting, restoring, and sustainably using tropical forestlands (FAO & FILAC, 2021, p. 40; Rights and Resources Initiative, Rainforest Foundation Norway, cited in Young, 2024, p. 19).

Inclusive knowledge systems

Women often have distinct and valuable knowledge about biodiversity, sustainable practices, and interdependencies between communities and ecosystems due to their gender-specific roles, but their knowledge is often overlooked (UNDP, 2024a, p. 23). Governments can take steps to recognise, value, and integrate women's and girls' traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices into biodiversity planning and management

processes, and appoint gender-biodiversity focal points to support sharing of knowledge and experience through means such as peer-to-peer learning, mentoring, and coaching (UNDP, 2024a, p. 55).

Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) have extensive knowledge, experience, and cultural memory about ecological processes, environmental management, production systems, and institutions supporting the sustainable use of resources (IPBES, 2019, p. 827). Traditional knowledge about ‘fauna and flora and their uses, pests and diseases, fire, climate, and soils, and how these elements respond to human practices’ contribute to forest management, use, restoration, monitoring, and adaptation (FAO & FILAC, 2021, p. 37). Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ contributions to sustainability can be facilitated by promoting education, knowledge generation and the maintenance of different knowledge systems about nature and its sustainable use; recognising land tenure, access, and resource rights; the principle of free, prior and informed consent; sharing benefits arising from ecosystem use fairly and equitably; and improving collaboration and co-management arrangements with local communities (IPBES, 2019, pp. 17–18).

Data and evidence gaps

Gender-disaggregated data are important for designing evidence-based policies, tracking the effectiveness of interventions, mobilising gender-responsive financing, and monitoring implementation and progress towards goals and targets (Booker et al., 2022b, pp. 19–20; OECD, 2023, p. 16; UNDP, 2024a, pp. 38–39). Biodiversity conservation has been impeded by local and global knowledge and data gaps, including gaps in enabling diverse stakeholders to access, share, and use data across sectors and regions (Li et al., 2023, p. 4). Notable data gaps exist around how gender interacts with the right to land, natural resources and biodiversity; access to and use of food, water energy and sanitation; and climate, sustainable production and consumption, and health and well-being (UNEP 2019, cited in Booker et al., 2022b, p. 20). Qualitative and quantitative data should both be collected so that statistics can be complemented with analyses of issues such as attitudes, values and concerns of women related to biodiversity (Booker et al., 2022b, p. 24). Data about consultation and decision-making processes, such as the representation of women in decision-making and implementation roles, can be used to monitor these processes and support equitable participation (Booker et al., 2022b, p. 20; UNDP, 2024a, p. 6). Approaches to improving data collection include: better engagement with national statistics offices; increased funding and capacity for national statistics offices; improvements to methods so that data can be disaggregated; and engagement with other international biodiversity-related conventions (Booker et al., 2022a, p. 10, 2022b, pp. 23–24). Monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be reviewed by gender experts to establish baselines, allow project impacts to be tracked, and identify successful types of interventions (Booker et al., 2022b, p. 24). Data collection efforts can also encompass diverse gender identities including men, boys, non-binary and transgender individuals (Booker et al., 2022b, p. 31). Models for addressing these challenges could include a gender and biodiversity observatory, or database and policy platform (Booker et al., 2022b, p. 31).

Sustainable resource-based economic activity

When local communities increase their income through sustainable natural resource management, they become more likely to safeguard the biodiversity and ecosystem services that underpin those income streams (UNDP, 2024a, p. 6). The CBD Gender Plan of Action encourages Parties to ‘promote women’s empowerment and entrepreneurial opportunities in biodiversity-based supply chains and sectors, that support sustainable management and production practices’ (CBD, 2022a, para. 1.4). To do this, countries can: address barriers to education for women and girls; provide training or resources to support business development and obtaining certifications to guarantee and promote traditional products; offer business support mechanisms such as micro-credit, low-interest loans, market linkages, assistance with start-up costs, and incubator programs; and develop financial management and entrepreneurship capacities (UNDP, 2024b, p. 27, 2024a, p. 55). These activities could be undertaken in collaboration with women and women’s groups, and legal and policy frameworks could be designed to ensure that women and marginalised groups can access opportunities (UNDP, 2024a, p. 20).

Human rights-based approaches

A human rights-based approach provides a legal framework for advancing the interests of marginalised groups within the context of action on biodiversity. The approach links rights and rights-holders with duties and duty-bearers: ‘for every right of a rights-holder there is an obligation on one or more duty-bearers to take certain actions to ensure that the right is respected, protected, promoted or fulfilled’ (Franks et al., 2024, p. 16). States are the primary duty-bearers under international law, but all actors, including businesses and NGOs, have obligations to at least respect rights within the scope of their influence and power, and as far as possible contribute to protection (OHCHR 2011, cited in Franks et al., 2024, p. 16). The GBF calls for a human rights-based approach and notes the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment recently recognised by the United Nations² (Booker et al., 2022a, p. 34). UNHCR, UNEP and UN Women have highlighted 17 human rights obligations and responsibilities of states and other actors related to environmental change (including biodiversity loss) and gender equality (Booker et al., 2022a, p. 34).

² UN General Assembly resolution 76/300, adopted on 28 July 2022 (<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3983329>)

Session 3: What are the barriers to achieving inclusive and transformative action for biodiversity?

Nele Van Doninck

Gender equality, diversity, and inclusion are key considerations for equitable and effective biodiversity conservation practice and have the potential to foster innovative and more effective solutions to conservation challenges (Jimenez et al., 2019; Lau, 2020; Márquez-García et al., 2024). At the same time, evidence shows that the traditional knowledge, systems and practices of Indigenous Peoples, on-site stewards of biodiversity conservation, are sustainable and can help in setting realistic and effective biodiversity targets that simultaneously improve local livelihoods (Reyes-García et al., 2022; UNEP, 2023). However, many barriers still exist for women, girls, Indigenous Peoples and local communities to fully participate in, be valued in, and benefit from global and local biodiversity and conservation efforts. Understanding these barriers is key to achieving transformative change for biodiversity.

Barriers can take many forms, such as legal frameworks, social norms, capacity barriers and perceptions about the role of women, girls, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities in biodiversity management that inform access to natural resources and decision-making opportunities (UNDP, 2024a, p. 6; Zurba & Papadopoulos, 2023). Other barriers include – amongst others - the invisibility of women's and girls' roles in data, the persistence of gender-based violence, and global knowledge hierarchies which undervalue local and traditional knowledges. Moreover, many of the issues are related and intersect. In addition, the dynamics as described can play out quite differently in different settings and contexts, depending on local customary practices and context-specific circumstances.

Women and girls and marginalised groups are also facing policies, national and international, that are not sufficiently addressing, or raising ambition on priorities related to their role in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Similarly, Indigenous People's role in biodiversity management is often not adequately acknowledged. In addition, these policies do not offer sufficient protection against forces that threaten sustainable biodiversity conservation, such as extractive, agribusiness and other commercial operations. These issues are not isolated but are underpinned by more fundamental issues such as patriarchal social systems and pervasive and persistent norms about gender roles (Booker et al., 2022a, p. 10) or global knowledge hierarchies favouring Western-centric knowledge over traditional (Zurba & Papadopoulos, 2023) – and often female-held – knowledge about nature and a care-full stewardship of natural resources and biodiversity management. These policies may actively harm women and marginalised groups and their position in their homes and communities. Such policies are often quite context-specific, but overall dynamics bear many similarities. In the sections below are some key issues highlighted which women and girls and marginalised groups face in their efforts to achieving transformative change for biodiversity.

Challenges concerning decision-making power and agenda-setting

Women and girls, as well as marginalised groups such as Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), face multiple barriers when it comes to decision-making

power and agency. Due to a wide range of challenges in their day-to-day lives, which are the result of deep-rooted social and cultural norms, non-white and non-male actors in biodiversity conservation are often undervalued and even invisibilised. Patriarchal systems and structures as well as power imbalances, stereotyping and bias, makes women face reduced agency and participation in decision-making processes (Shellock & Northrop, 2024), and members of Indigenous groups, women as well as men, are commonly stripped of their agency as rightful stewards of their lands (United Nations, 2021). The outcomes of colonial histories have often marginalised communities and their worldviews in decision-making about their own livelihoods (Wheeler & Root-Bernstein, 2020). This plays out at various levels, (amongst others) in the community and in agenda-setting contexts, such as conservation organizations or governmental and non-governmental organizations. Hampered access to participation may result in decisions and policies that are not beneficial for the women, girls and marginalised groups involved.

Challenges for women

Although research on the link between equitable governance and conservation has pointed at the importance of involvement of local and Indigenous communities (Dawson et al., 2024, p. 1007), the practical rollout may come with frictions. **‘Community-based conservation efforts** build on existing community structures and social norms, **which are commonly dominated by men’** (Alexander et al., 2023, p. 1), thus hampering women’s ability to voice concerns and inform decision-making processes.

These customary practices are sometimes quite far-reaching, and restrictive customs have been documented to silence women’s voices, such as during an IFAD-implemented and GEF financed project on inclusive natural resource management in Eswatini. There, the program succeeded in working with local groups to relax the customary practice where women were not allowed to speak in meetings in which men were present (CBD, 2022d, p. 78). Moreover, deference to the men in the household may **hold women back in speaking up** during community meetings, participating physically but remaining silent (CBD, 2022d, p. 56), and ‘traditional roles and discrimination may also limit women’s participation in relevant governance structures related to biodiversity management, such as Protected Area Councils and Rural Development Councils. These factors often hold women back from contributing actively as key agents of change for nature’ (UNDP, 2024a, p. 8), despite their often-important de facto roles in natural resource management. Some biodiversity conservation approaches may consequently neglect women’s voices and deepen existing inequalities and inequities.

At agenda-setting levels, critiques have been made of conservation organisations, governmental or intergovernmental institutions, where decision making processes remain **largely in the hands of white men from the Global North** (Shellock & Northrop, 2024, p. 2), and they are thus setting biodiversity and climate agendas. Even though there are opportunities for women to be included at all levels of decision-making (political, economic and public life), they remain underrepresented in spaces where policies are shaped (Shellock & Northrop, 2024, p. 6). This is no coincidence. Evidence on women’s careers on conservation shows that women are under-represented and/or excluded from decision making within organizations focused on conservation, climate, and natural resource management, as well as in research and policy-setting contexts (James et al., 2023, p. 1).

As a result, **biodiversity policies may not adequately consider gender and gender diversity at all, or devise recommendations that are not favourable for women, girls and gender-diverse people³.**

Challenges for Indigenous Peoples and marginalised groups

Although efforts are being made to incorporate Indigenous Peoples and local communities as stakeholders in the drafting of biodiversity conservation policies, many issues remain, and these groups continue to face challenges to full participation in the crafting and implementation of biodiversity policy at local, regional, and global levels. For instance, about 40% of terrestrial protected areas overlap with Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' lands, but Indigenous Peoples and local communities formally govern less than 1% of them (Reyes-García et al., 2022, p. 84).

When it comes to participation in Global Environmental Governance forums, scholars have suggested that 'although recognition is acknowledged as essential, actual inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' voice in environmental governance continues to be limited' (Zurba & Papadopoulos, 2023, p. 88). 'In particular, inequities around power and resources were often described as producing both financial and technical constraints that limit Indigenous Peoples from being able to participate, access, and navigate environmental governance processes' (Zurba & Papadopoulos, 2023, p. 89).

This lack of agency and decision-making power holds several risks. **Ignoring Indigenous Peoples and local communities** and their knowledge in decision-making processes regarding protected area establishment and management **is likely to be disruptive for local communities and result in conservation failures**, feeding into sentiments that conservation can be a colonial enterprise' (Reyes-García et al., 2022, p. 86). Lack of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' agency in biodiversity policy also runs the risk of using Indigenous and local knowledge only for utilitarian needs, especially when not understood as a relational expression based on human-to-nature appreciation and responsibilities, but merely as decontextualised, co-opted and/or instrumentalised for conservationists' purposes (Reyes-García et al., 2022, p. 86). Moreover, a wrongful use of information and knowledge 'can have impacts on local communities that may inadvertently erode trust between decision-makers, scientists and Indigenous and local knowledge holders. For example, while Indigenous knowledge may be used to inform environmental policies, resulting protectionist environmental policies can interfere with Indigenous People's capacity to conduct their traditional practices on their land and limit the capacity for future adaptation to environmental change' (Wheeler & Root-Bernstein, 2020, p. 1637).

Land tenure and rights

Although in many regions of the world, women have significant responsibilities for agriculture and collecting natural resources, '**women generally hold far fewer rights than men** and constitute less than 13% of landholders globally' (FAO, 2020; Woodhouse et al., 2022, p. 2).

³ Shellock and Northrop (2024, p. 10) identify seven barriers to effective gender equality policy: 1. Lack of political will and mandates, 2. Actions not addressing systemic change, 3. Lack of intersectional approaches, 4. Low quality data and lack of standardization, 5. Capacity constraints & lack of resources & funding, 6. Absence of a feminist lens and 7. Substitutions between climate or biodiversity and gender funding.

Moreover, when women hold rights, they often come in the form of user rights through men in their families. However, this reliance on male relatives puts women at risk of losing rights or access to land when their marital status or family composition changes (Landesa, 2023, pp. 3–4). This in turn hampers investments by women, as long-term investments for biodiversity require control over management, exclusion and selling (FAO, 2020; Woodhouse et al., 2022, p. 2). In addition, evidence shows that community decision-making about natural resources located on common lands often – once again – **excludes women’s voices** (Wedeman & Petruney, 2019, p. 5).

As such, in many contexts, **existing legal frameworks hamper equal opportunities between men and women**. According to a study by the World Bank, which looked at right of property in 190 countries, released in 2023, ‘40% of these countries have at least one legal constraint limiting women’s rights to property, 23% do not grant widows the same inheritance rights as widowers, and 22% prevent daughters from inheriting the same proportion of assets as sons’ (UNDP, 2024a, p. 14; World Bank, 2023). Moreover, evidence shows that ‘the lack of equal access and control of land can perpetuate gender disparities and result in missed opportunities to incorporate women’s biodiversity knowledge into land management practices’ (UNDP, 2024a, p. 14; World Bank, 2023). The uncertain access to land and natural resources thus hampers decision-making power for women, girls and gender-diverse people, and as such, their true participation and the valuation of the investments they can bring, both financial as well as intellectual.

In addition, many Indigenous Communities trying to protect their lands are still struggling to get their land rights recognised (United Nations, 2021) and still **face mining, logging and other extractive industries**, that happen now, but have long histories of encroachment on Indigenous lands, and which have had a devastating impact on Indigenous Peoples’ cultural and physical survival. Conservation initiatives, in the form of protected areas or national parks, too, have been associated with dispossession and displacement. Much of the world’s non-commercially exploited land and many of its remaining mineral and forest resources, major rivers, fossil fuels and sources of renewable energy today is found in or around the territories of Indigenous Peoples. **These lands can be seen as constituting the final frontier in the frantic quest for control over comparatively unexploited lands and natural resources by states, extractive and agribusiness corporations, and international conservation organizations** (United Nations, 2021, p. 38).

Furthermore, in regards to land rights for Indigenous Peoples, *The State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples: Rights to Lands, Territories and Resources* report (2021) stated: ‘Among the major challenges and threats to Indigenous rights to lands, territories and resources — and by extension to the subsistence, self-determined development and cultural integrity of Indigenous populations — are evictions, violence, oppression, criminalization, community fragmentation, the undermining of traditional authority and authorities, the destruction of or denial of access to sacred sites, the dispossession of lands, and the denial of traditional livelihoods’ (United Nations, 2021, p. 39).

Gender-based violence

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains an important problem for many women globally. It is estimated that world-wide, one in three women and girls will experience gender-based violence during her lifetime (World Bank, 2019). GBV occurs in all societies, is rooted in

discriminatory gender rules and shrouded in impunity, and is used **as a means of control, subjugation and exploitation that further reinforces gender inequality** (Castañeda Camey et al., 2020, p. xi). More specifically for conservation and biodiversity management, GBV can be seen as ‘a systematic means of control to enforce and protect existing privileges around natural resources, maintaining power imbalances that create tensions within families, between communities and among involved actors’ (Castañeda Camey et al., 2020, p. xiii). An additional problem is that the true extent of gender-based violence is hard to assess, because it often remains underreported due to ‘**stigma, shame, fear of retaliation, and social norms that discourage victims from coming forward**’ (Data2X, 2023, p. 19). Victims may also prioritise immediate survival over reporting. More data is needed to adequately map and understand the extent of the problem, however, this is a complicated undertaking, as ‘the relationship between Gender-Based Violence and environmental issues is multifaceted and often context specific, requiring dedicated surveys or other data collection tools in order to measure accurately’ (Data2X, 2023, p. 19).

Absence of adequately disaggregated data

A key consideration to devise quality policy regarding biodiversity management is evidence. However, much of **the data collected is not adequately disaggregated by age, race, disability, sexual orientation, migration status, etc., which hampers intersectional analysis**. This is a major constraint internationally and nationally in understanding how women and girls' lives intersect with biodiversity’ (Booker et al., 2022a, p. 10). Other data gaps include (Data2X, 2023, p. 5):

- Most environmental data is collected at the household level as opposed to the individual level, meaning that it is not possible to assess intra-household gender differences. Capturing intra-household differences in access is especially difficult.
- Data collection standards and methodologies are lacking for many gender-relevant environment and climate change issues. As a result, governments often define, collect, and report information differently, complicating efforts to generate internationally comparable statistics.
- Gender data collection efforts are further complicated by climate change due to the unique challenges and risks of data collection in insecure environments.
- Data needs are context-specific and sometimes dynamic depending on countries’ own climate change impacts and priorities.

‘The lack of data that considers gender-specific issues and how they intersect with other and multiple lines of difference, leads to many projects remaining ‘gender blind’ or treat gender as a women versus-men problem and only address women’s issues’ (Brown & Fortnam 2018, Kariuki & Birner 2016, cited in Lau, 2020). In addition, in times of rapid digitalization and models based on machine learning, a lack of quality and adequately disaggregated data might lead to modelling that repeats or even exacerbates existing inequalities, producing biodiversity management policies that are not beneficial for women, girls and gender-diverse people.

In addition, and specifically **concerning Indigenous Peoples, several problems in data collection have been identified as well**. Key issues concerned collecting statistics based

on Indigenous languages might be useful, but incomplete, as languages are lost following urbanization, discrimination and other factors. In addition, standard questionnaires used do not always accurately reflect the situation of Indigenous Peoples, as indigenous family and social patterns are sometimes very different from the profile of the rest of the population. Indigenous Peoples who have been relocated – voluntarily or not – often face the dilemma of no longer having the opportunity of identifying as indigenous in their new country of residence, and finally, Indigenous Peoples often reside in areas affected by war and conflicts, which also poses challenges in terms of data collection (UN DESA, n.d.).

The lack of disaggregated data and the insights that might follow from the analysis of such data risks a critical misunderstanding of discrimination and inequalities, which are often multiple and intersecting (see *intersectionality*, below). In line with the Leave No-One Behind Agenda, which is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), understanding how inequalities can be reduced is key.

Global knowledge hierarchies

Knowledge, know-how and values conveyed by Indigenous languages and cultures are critical to set the world onto a more sustainable path (Unesco, 2023). Knowledge about the natural resources and careful land stewardship is often encapsulated in Indigenous languages and cultures, which have been under threat in formal educational institutions which favour official, non-Indigenous languages and Western-style curricula. Indigenous scholars and scholars from the Global South are pointing at the Western influence on conservation policies (Gilio-Whitaker, 2020; Hernandez, 2022; Mbaria & Ogada, 2017), and the need to take traditional knowledge, knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local knowledge systems seriously. Academic evidence also shows that Indigenous and local knowledge must compete for legitimacy with and within western systems, and that Global Environmental Governance organizations (GEG) ‘privilege “global kinds of knowledge” which is often described as knowledge that can be broadly applied and is decontextualised (Zurba & Papadopoulos, 2023, p. 91).

In addition, ‘women often have distinct and valuable knowledge of local biodiversity, sustainable practices, and interdependencies between communities and natural ecosystems’ (UNDP, 2024a, p. 6). However, due to the lack of women’s input or leadership, biodiversity policies often result in **programs that may not respond to women’s needs or account for their knowledge and experience effectively** (UNDP, 2024a, p. 4). In such cases, the relationality between several of the issues in this section becomes clear. The lack of input and leadership is often the direct result of discrimination, or of the lack of capacity – such as financial or time constraints - to be present at decision-making levels or positions where policy can be influenced. Not acknowledging local knowledge, and women (and men) as bearers of that knowledge which accumulated within a given community for generations leads to policies that devalue local Indigenous and female conservation actors and silence their voices.

Intersectionality

Gender Inequality is ‘intersectional’, in that it is intensified and exacerbated by other factors (Koehler 2016, Martin & Hossain 2022, cited in Shellock & Northrop, 2024, p. 6). When it

comes to gender issues specifically, **women are strongly woven into the fabric of their communities**, and as such, are influenced by other factors than gender only. 'Place of residence, income, educational background, ethnicity (e.g. caste), disabilities, indigeneity, religion, economic class, professional status, age and migration status can influence an individual's vulnerability to and experience of the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss' (Shellock & Northrop, 2024, p. 6).

'However, the treatment and inclusion of gender in biodiversity conservation could be greatly improved. Many projects remain gender blind (Brown & Fortnam, 2018; Kariuki & Birner, 2016) or treat gender as a women versus-men problem and only address women's issues' (Lau, 2020, p. 1589). **Identifying gender as isolated and looking only at women's roles in a given context sometimes produces perverse outcomes 'such as increasing women's labour burden or backlash from powerful stakeholders'** (Arora-Jonsson 2014, cited in Lau, 2020, p. 1589), which actually worsen women's, girls and gender-diverse people's positions in their communities.

In conclusion, people (women and men) who simultaneously belong to different commonly socially excluded groups, are likely to face additional barriers due to compounding stigma based on these identities. **Neglecting to account for the intersectional nature of vulnerabilities risks homogenizing groups, and not adequately capturing information on the needs and capabilities of different groups** (Martin & Hossain, 2022, p. 5), in turn leading to biodiversity and conservation policies that do not achieve adequate, inclusive and transformative action for biodiversity.

Session 4: Championing the implementation of Target 22 and Target 23 as fundamental to achieving the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Brian Lucas

What is the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework?

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is a global agreement to **halt and reverse biodiversity loss worldwide**, with four overarching goals to be achieved by 2050 and 23 individual targets to be achieved by 2030 (CBD, 2022c). It is supported by a monitoring framework, implementation strategies, a Gender Plan of Action, and other mechanisms covering financial resources; capacity building; development, technical, and scientific cooperation; and more (CBD, 2024d). It was adopted in 2022 at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) (CBD, 2024d, 2024a). Two of the Framework's targets focus on inclusive participation and gender equality:

TARGET 22

Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders.

TARGET 23

Ensure gender equality in the implementation of the Framework through a gender-responsive approach, where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention, including by recognizing their equal rights and access to land and natural resources and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity.

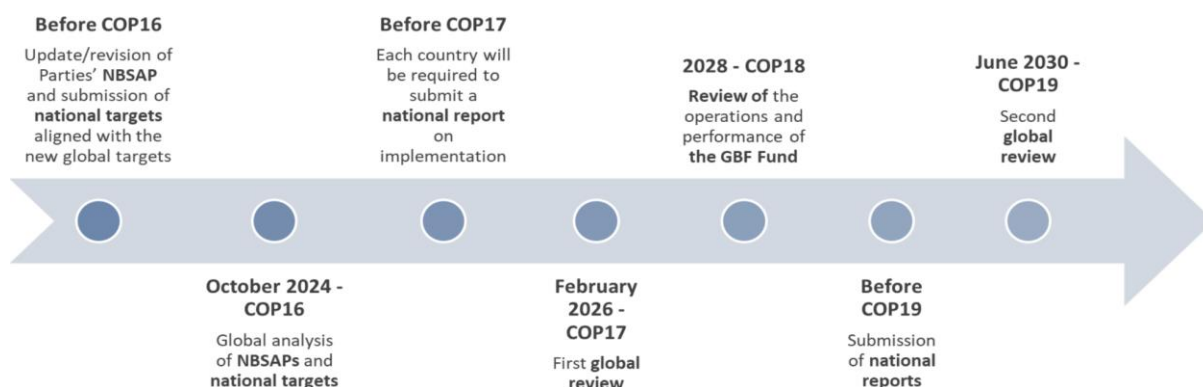
Source: (CBD, 2022c)

The Framework is supported by a Gender Plan of Action aimed at ensuring that all people, and in particular all women and girls, have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to positive biodiversity outcomes; that biodiversity policy, planning, and programming address the perspectives, interests, needs and human rights of women and girls; and that the Framework is implemented in a gender-responsive way (CBD, 2022a). It includes recommendations for actions and timelines, and addresses issues including gender-based violence, the role of women environmental human rights advocates, enabling conditions for gender-responsive implementation of the Framework, data disaggregation, and women's participation in planning, monitoring, and reporting (UNDP, 2024a, p. 11).

The Framework is not a treaty, and is not legally binding on countries, but it requires countries that are Parties to the Convention to monitor and report on progress against the Framework's goals and targets at least every five years (Aubert & Dudley, 2023, p. 2;

Brader, 2023). Before the next Conference of the Parties in October 2024, countries are expected to revise and update their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) and to submit national targets aligned with the Framework's goals and targets (Aubert & Dudley, 2023, pp. 1–2; CBD, 2024c).

Timeline for the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) until 2030



Source: Aubert & Dudley, 2023, p. 2. Reproduction for non-commercial purposes authorised.

The development of the GBF builds on lessons learned from the Aichi biodiversity targets (2011-2020). Although none of the Aichi targets were met, lessons arising from these efforts included recognising the importance of mobilising finance, clear and measurable targets and indicators, robust monitoring and reporting frameworks, strong compliance and accountability processes, and ambitious domestic action to implement the global targets in each country (Aubert & Dudley, 2023, p. 3; Jönsson & Purvis, 2022, p. 12; Maney et al., 2024, pp. 2–5; Obura, 2023, p. 78; Xu et al., 2021, pp. 411–412).

Potential entry points for supporting the implementation of Targets 22 and 23

The following section introduces some potential entry points for efforts to support the implementation of Targets 22 and 23 that have been highlighted in the literature. This is not an exhaustive list of all possible approaches, nor a full discussion of the evidence around each approach, but is intended to assist as a starting point for discussion.

Developing targets and indicators

Clear, specific, measurable, and realistic targets and indicators are important for the success of the GBF, and extensive work has gone into discussing targets and indicators for the GBF monitoring framework (Aubert & Dudley, 2023, p. 3; Li et al., 2023, pp. 2, 6). A review of progress towards the Aichi targets⁴ found that more progress had been made towards targets that were measurable, unambiguous, realistic, and scalable, with some evidence for specificity⁵ (Green et al., 2019, p. 1364). For many targets, including Targets 22

⁴ The Aichi targets were a set of 20 targets for biodiversity conservation included in the CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity that was adopted in 2010; the targets were intended to be achieved by 2020, but none were fully achieved by the target date (Maney et al., 2024, p. 1; Xu et al., 2021, p. 411).

⁵ These findings were in line with the long-established principle of project management that targets should be 'SMART', meaning specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound (in the case of the Aichi targets, all targets were equally time-bound) (Green et al., 2019, p. 1364).

and 23, binary indicators have been proposed as headline indicators, but questions have been raised about whether binary indicators will be adequate to assess complex issues including the degree of effectiveness of interventions (Martinez, 2023). As of May 2024, headline indicators for Targets 22 and 23 had not yet been finalised, but several (optional) component and complementary indicators⁶ had been proposed, including indicators relating to participation in decision-making processes and governance, linguistic diversity, land rights, and harm to environmental rights defenders (CBD, 2024b, pp. 18–19). As work continues leading up to COP16 and beyond, there is an opportunity to further develop and strengthen gender-responsive indicators for the Gender Plan of Action, Targets 22 and 23, and across the GBF (UNDP, 2024a, p. 56, 2024b, p. 26).

Strengthening monitoring, reporting, and accountability

Consistent and transparent monitoring and reporting processes could contribute to achieving conservation goals, tracking how national action plans are implemented, and better understanding what works well. Past NBSAPs have been ‘unwieldy, idiosyncratic in format, and inaccessible to analyse’, presenting information in non-standardised formats that made comparison, synthesis, and lesson-learning difficult, but current moves towards more standardised reporting in National Reports may increase their transparency and utility (Maney et al., 2024, pp. 1–6). Building capacities to monitor gender mainstreaming will be important: among countries supported by UNDP during the production of the Sixth National Reports to the CBD, only one-fifth of the countries perceived that they had sufficient access to data on gender and the ability to use the data effectively (UNDP, 2024a, p. 5). There is now an opportunity, heading in to the CBD’s next reporting cycle, to strengthen mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the Gender Plan of Action and the Framework targets (UNDP, 2024b, p. 26). UNDP has suggested that countries should undertake gender analysis to better understand gender relations, roles, identities, access to resources, and inequalities at different societal levels, drawing on qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of national sources (UNDP, 2024b, p. 22, 2024a, p. 54).

More robust compliance and accountability mechanisms based on standardised monitoring systems could produce better knowledge about what works and what has not; help countries learn from each other’s experiences; and incentivise performance (Maney et al., 2024, p. 5; Xu et al., 2021, p. 413). The CBD has rarely reviewed countries’ performance against targets or held countries to account for their commitments; its reviews have tended to summarise global trends rather than highlight individual countries’ performance (Xu et al., 2021, pp. 413, 416). The existing voluntary peer review mechanism provides an opportunity for reviewing individual countries, but it is a weaker mechanism than the comparable mechanism within the UNFCCC, which is compulsory, brings in more technical expertise, and includes opportunities for civil society organisations to contribute (Ulloa et al., 2018, pp. 374–375; Xu et al., 2021, p. 416). A more robust review system could involve reviews of countries’ National Reports by peers, technical experts, and other stakeholders to encourage countries to increase their ambitions and keep moving towards the global targets (Xu et al.,

⁶ Headline indicators are the small set of high-level indicators which capture the overall scope of the goals and targets of the Framework and are used for planning and tracking national, regional, and global progress. Component indicators are optional and are used for monitoring components of each goal and target at the global, regional, national and subnational levels. Complementary indicators are optional and are used for thematic or in-depth analysis at the global, regional, national, and subnational levels. (CBD, 2022b)

2021, p. 417). Engaging local communities in monitoring and governance could help build community support and strengthen conservation practices (Li et al., 2023, p. 6).

Ensuring that women, Indigenous Peoples and local communities participate and take leadership roles in developing, updating, and implementing NBSAPs

NBSAPs are expected to be developed and implemented in a broad participatory process including women and girls as well as other representatives of civil society (IUCN, 2023). To ensure that women are effectively engaged, UNDP suggests that countries work with women's groups, gender institutions, gender experts, Indigenous Peoples and local communities; involve women in defining the objectives and outcomes of consultations; convene an expert group including women environmental human rights defenders to develop guidance for eliminating gender disparities in participation, leadership, and decision-making; maintain stakeholders' involvement throughout the process; provide training to help women participate equitably and actively; consider cultural norms; and organise meetings at convenient times for all using a language or languages that best facilitates communication (UNDP, 2024b, p. 25, 2024a, pp. 29, 55). Where cultural norms make it difficult for women to actively participate alongside men, countries may consider holding separate consultations or exploring other mechanisms to gather women's contributions (UNDP, 2024a, p. 29).

When women take leadership roles in policy negotiations, they advocate for more concrete and ambitious outcomes than men, achieve more enduring agreements, and pay more attention to the needs of women, youth, and marginalised groups (UNDP, 2024a, p. 32). The CBD's Gender Plan of Action recognises the importance of full and effective participation and leadership of women and calls for Parties to 'increase opportunities and strengthen the meaningful and effective participation and leadership of women at all levels of action, engagement, and decision-making', including capacity development in leadership, negotiation, and facilitation (UNDP, 2024a, p. 32). UNDP has suggested that countries can support women by: ensuring gender-balanced leadership in governance bodies; involving women in meaningful stakeholder consultations; creating leadership positions that are equally available to women and men; providing opportunities for capacity-building in leadership as well as in technical knowledge about ecosystems and sustainable resource use; supporting women in leadership positions; and allowing women to meet independently from men and with peer support to improve training outcomes (UNDP, 2024a, p. 56). Advice from national experts can further help develop approaches to addressing gender disparities in leadership (UNDP, 2024a, pp. 31–32).

Increased participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in revising and updating NBSAPs is likely to result in better outcomes for biodiversity and more accurate data collection; Indigenous Peoples and local communities often depend on biodiversity for their livelihoods and cultural integrity and have important knowledge on how to sustainably use it (UNDP, 2024c, pp. 12–13). Approaches that have been suggested to improve the engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in revising and updating NBSAPs include: ensuring that Indigenous Peoples and local communities select their own representation using their own internal procedures; using appropriate languages and formats; offering extra support to introduce concepts, clarify the scope of discussions, and hear from Indigenous Peoples and local communities about how they would prefer to be

engaged; holding geographically-focused consultations; and following the principle of free, prior, and informed consent (UNDP, 2024c, p. 13, 2024b, p. 25).

Incorporating women's, Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' knowledge

Women often have distinct and valuable knowledge of local biodiversity, sustainable practices, and interdependencies between communities and natural ecosystems (UNDP, 2024a, p. 23). Countries can take steps to identify key knowledge holders to include in stakeholder engagement processes, including Indigenous women and those from local communities, understand the kinds of knowledge that they hold, and support peer exchanges and other opportunities to elevate and capture women's knowledge, strengthen partnerships among women and between men and women, and enable women's participation in processes to update and revise NBSAPs (UNDP, 2024a, p. 24). The CBD's Gender Plan of Action recommends that governments appoint national gender-biodiversity focal points to support knowledge exchange, sharing experiences and best practices, peer-to-peer learning, mentoring, and coaching (UNDP, 2024a, p. 24).

Strengthening integration of Indigenous and local knowledge. Little progress has been made on integrating Indigenous Peoples and local communities and their knowledge in formulating and implementing biodiversity targets and plans, due to barriers such as epistemological differences between knowledge systems, limited academic recognition of Indigenous and local knowledge, and issues of scale and power (Li et al., 2023, p. 3; Xu et al., 2021, p. 416). Advocates for Indigenous Peoples and local communities recommend that links between diverse knowledge systems should be strengthened throughout monitoring and reporting platforms, and should incorporate indicators on trends in traditional knowledge and the well-being of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (Forest Peoples Programme, 2020, p. 27). The CBD Gender Plan of Action also emphasises the importance of incorporating traditional knowledge and customary practices into NBSAPs (UNDP, 2024a, p. 24).

Mainstreaming gender in NBSAPs

Achievement of targets 22 and 23 will depend in part on mainstreaming gender into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. Many NBSAPs in the past have not incorporated gender effectively: out of 50 NBSAPs completed between July 2016 and January 2022, 38% contained no references to women or gender, 92% made no reference to girls, and among those that did mention women and girls, only 16% included at least one gender indicator, only 10% provided budget allocations for activities to address women's priorities, and only 8% included any sex-disaggregated data (Booker et al., 2022b, pp. 4–8). Two examples of NBSAPs that have been particularly strong on gender inclusion are the Philippines, which integrated references to women or gender across multiple elements of its action plan, including targets, activities and 92 indicators; and Mexico, with 19 action areas, 50 actions and 44 detailed actions on promoting and strengthening the inclusion of women in the management and use of biodiversity (Booker et al., 2022b, pp. 8, 13).

Linking with other national policies and working across government

NBSAPs could potentially be strengthened by making stronger connections with other national policies, strategies, and commitments on gender or equality (Booker et

al., 2022b, pp. 10–11). Past NBSAPs have often been developed in some degree of isolation: only seven out of 50 NBSAPs completed between 2016 and 2022 made reference to other relevant national policies and strategies, such as gender or equality policies (Booker et al., 2022b, p. 11). Similarly, among G7 countries only one example of national gender policy (the USA’s 2021 strategy on gender equity and equality) could be found that made an explicit connection between gender and the environment, including biodiversity (Booker et al., 2022b, p. 15).

Thinking and working across sectors and jurisdictions has the potential to enable transformational results for sustainability (IPBES, 2019, pp. 17, 39). Most NBSAPs have been adopted by environment ministries without fully engaging with other ministries and units across the whole of government, leaving significant barriers for implementation (Prip 2018, cited in Xu et al., 2021, pp. 411–412). However, ‘cross-sectoral approaches, including landscape approaches, integrated watershed and coastal zone management, marine spatial planning, bioregional scale planning, and new urban planning paradigms’ offer opportunities to combine efforts and create synergies across sectors (IPBES, 2019, p. 40). For example, in Malawi and in Costa Rica, national environment and women’s ministries or departments collaborated to develop mutually supportive policy approaches including ‘forest landscape restoration planning, preparation of NBSAPs, and microfinancing schemes targeted at women as stewards of their local environments’ (CBD 2022, cited in Booker et al., 2022b, p. 28). In Uganda, a cross-government Gender Action Plan will coordinate actions of multiple ministries and local government in support of the three Rio conventions (CBD, UNCCD, and UNFCCC) and the Sustainable Development Goals, and the government will establish a mechanism to undertake collaborative decision-making and learning exchanges across government agencies (CBD 2022, cited in Booker et al., 2022b, p. 27).

Synergies with other international conventions

Among the ten major international conventions related to biodiversity⁷, there are few references to women, girls or gender (Booker et al., 2022a, p. 24). The CBD has made the most progress towards reflecting and responding to women’s and girls’ priorities, followed by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The other conventions are more limited in their engagement with gender issues, and do not refer to women, girls, or gender in the titles of any texts or targets or include a gender action plan (Booker et al., 2022a, pp. 24–26). The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) does address gender in a substantial way, and suggestions have been made about pursuing synergies among the CBD, the UNCCD and the UNFCCC to strengthen cooperation and knowledge sharing, undertake joint reporting, mobilise resources for other joint activities, develop strategic partnerships, map gender mainstreaming opportunities, or develop a joint global observatory (Booker et al., 2022a, pp. 26, 33).

⁷ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, 2004; UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), 1996; Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1993; Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 1979; Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, 1979; Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), 1975; World Heritage Convention, 1972; Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar), 1971; International Plant Protection Convention, 1952; International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, 1946 (Booker et al., 2022a, pp. 25–26).

Session 5: Inclusive biodiversity finance for transformative change

Kathryn Cheeseman

Background and types of biodiversity financing

Mobilising funds to support action on biodiversity will be a huge challenge, and a variety of innovative funding mechanisms will need to be explored. The 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF's) target of mobilising US\$200 billion per year by 2030 will require extraordinary efforts to engage with a variety of funding sources, including the private sector, national budgets, and bilateral and multilateral development finance (Aubert & Dudley, 2023, pp. 2–3; Despot-Belmonte et al., 2022, p. 1; Li et al., 2023, p. 3). **The 10 Point Plan for Financing Biodiversity**, endorsed by 42 countries and the European Union, recognises that biodiversity finance must be delivered 'in partnership with all sectors and levels of society, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women and girls, youth and persons with disabilities' (DEFRA, 2022).

Mechanisms for the mobilisation of financial resources to reduce biodiversity loss and promote nature recovery are diverse. Approaches include incentivising private sector biodiversity-friendly investment, public funding and official development assistance (ODA), philanthropic funding, payments for ecosystem services (PES), green bonds, markets for biodiversity conservation, including credit and offset schemes, debt-for-nature swaps, and various taxes, fees, or other charges (UNDP, 2024a, p. 56; Xu et al., 2021, p. 416; Young, 2024). However, market-led approaches are limited by the lack of a readily identifiable unit for trade, which has led to heavy contestation in the literature over valuation exercises and the assumptions that they encompass (Kumar, 2008; Sullivan, 2012; Van der Hoff & Anyango-van Zwieten, 2022; Young, 2024).

Non-market-based approaches, including reducing harmful subsidies, scaling up nature-positive incentives, addressing vested interests, enabling stricter regulation, tackling tax evasion and increasing corporate taxation to increase public financing for biodiversity, are less prominent but widely perceived to be important approaches to driving more inclusive and transformative change to achieve improved biodiversity outcomes (Dempsey et al., 2021; Galaz et al., 2018; Turnhout et al., 2021; Young, 2024). Public subsidies for activities which undercut the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and contribute to biodiversity loss, particularly for the industrial sector (such as mining, oil and gas, and agribusiness), equate to around US\$500 billion per year, compared with around US\$75 billion per year provided in public biodiversity financing (Dempsey et al., 2021, p. 237; Young, 2024). Non-market-based approaches can also encompass a range of support for wider climate mitigation and adaptation, including biodiversity conservation, ecological farming and agroforestry, environmental education, improved public transportation, and enhanced community governance, participation, engagement, and advocacy (Young, 2024, p. 7). However, the power of vested interests to influence governance directives, a lack of ambition in metrics for improvements, and the evidence of shifting baselines of perceptions of the state of nature, are some factors undercutting the potential of these approaches (Dempsey et al., 2021; Turnhout et al., 2021; Young, 2024).

Targeting funds

Funds could be allocated to mainstreaming gender considerations in biodiversity planning, decision-making, development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), implementation, and monitoring. The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre estimates that slightly more than half (55%) of official development finance related to biodiversity between 2011 and 2020 included gender equality considerations in project plans (Despot-Belmonte et al., 2022, pp. 3–4), while a study by UNDP (2016, p. 4) finds that only around 0.01% of international funding supports projects that address both climate change and women’s rights. Additional funds from all sources may be required for enhancing technical expertise, stakeholder engagement, gender-disaggregated data collection, training, and support to enable women to participate fully (addressing issues such as childcare and travel expenses) (Despot-Belmonte et al., 2022, pp. 6–7; UNDP, 2024a, pp. 34, 56). However, increasing financial flows alone is insufficient for transformative change; it will also be important to address concomitant barriers to women’s economic participation, such as access to credit, and political participation, given that in only two countries globally are women represented in national parliaments proportionately to their share of the population (UNDP, 2016, p. 2).

There is increased recognition that financing needs to be channelled more directly to empowering Indigenous People and local communities. There is growing attention to getting ‘money where it matters’ to local people, growing recognition of the roles that Indigenous Peoples and local communities play in biodiversity conservation (Booker et al., 2022b, p. 18), and growing recognition of the importance of increasing local control and minimising the number of intermediaries (Young, 2024, p. 43). Despite this, however, a large proportion of funding still flows to international institutions rather than directly to local organisations (Li et al., 2023, p. 3). One study reported that between 2011 and 2020, only 17% of funding for Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ land tenure and forest management reached Indigenous-led and local community organisations (Young, 2024, p. 18), while a study of international climate finance committed between 2003 and 2016 indicates that less than 10% of funding was prioritised for local-level activities (IIED, 2019).

Examples of funding mechanisms established to support local biodiversity action

International mechanisms

- The **Global Biodiversity Framework Fund** (GBFF) has an aspirational goal of distributing 20% of its funds directly to Indigenous Peoples’ and local community organisations (GEF, 2024a). Its first distribution of programme funds in June 2024 achieved this goal, with US\$37.8 million for projects in Mexico and Brazil and 62% of these funds allocated to Indigenous Peoples and local communities (GEF, 2024b).
- The **Forest Tenure Pledge** is a commitment originally launched by 22

Indigenous-led mechanisms

- The **Mesoamerican Territorial Fund**, or *Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano* (FTM), is a donation-based fund run by the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB), an organisation led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities and community forestry organisations which collectively manage 24% of the region’s forests (AMPB, 2023, p. 11). The FTM provides direct investments to IPLC-led initiatives, investing US\$600,000 across ten projects in six countries in 2022 (AMPB, 2023, p. 11).

countries and philanthropic donors in 2021 to allocate US\$1.7 billion over five years to support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' forest tenure rights and roles as guardians of forests and nature. In the first two years of the commitment period, the total amount disbursed reached US\$815 million, but most funding was channelled through international NGOs, governments, or other large organisations, with 2.9%⁸ and 2.1% of funding in 2021 and 2022 channelled directly to Indigenous Peoples' and local community organisations (Forest Tenure Funders Group, 2023, pp. 7, 19, 24–25).

- **Tenure Facility**, a Swedish non-profit organisation founded in 2017, works with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to strengthen their claims to tenure and their ability to preserve and protect their territories, providing large (US\$0.5 to 1.5 million) five-year grants and technical assistance (Tenure Facility, 2023, pp. 2–5).

- The **Nusantara Fund** in Indonesia, a joint initiative of three national Indigenous Peoples' organisations and other local organisations and networks provides direct funding up to approximately US\$6,500 to support local organisations in natural resource management, agriculture, and the environment. Its funding comes from international philanthropic organisations (Nusantara Fund, n.d.).
- **Podáali**, the Indigenous Fund of the Brazilian Amazon, 'supports Indigenous self-determination and seeks to empower the local communities who have been managing Brazilian lands sustainably'; donors include the government of Norway, The Ford Foundation, Conservation International, the Pawanka Fund, and others (Wilson Center, 2021, p. 8). The fund is entirely led and managed by representatives of Indigenous Peoples (Podáali, 2022).

Funders can channel funding more directly to local organisations by making application processes more accessible and inclusive, empowering local populations to hold development actors to account, using participatory grant-making approaches, reserving a proportion of funding streams for local organisations, supporting core overhead costs as well as project costs, incorporating capacity building activities into programmes, reducing minimum grant amounts, and providing funding that is long-term, predictable, flexible, and allows recipients to manage risk and invest in their own capacity (Baguios et al., 2021, pp. 46–47, 51; Barbelet et al., 2021, pp. 13–14; Pinnington et al., 2024, p. 25; Robillard et al., 2021, pp. 35, 42–43). Other initiatives are working to adapt philanthropic and government funding mechanisms to recognise and strengthen the role of local communities, but many of these are very new and there is not yet good evidence of their impact (Young, 2024, p. 32).

⁸ The previous year's annual report had stated that 7% of funds had been channelled to Indigenous Peoples and local organisations, but later re-analysis using a more rigorous definition of direct support led the Forest Tenure Funders Group to revise that figure downwards to 2.9% (Forest Tenure Funders Group, 2023, p. 24).

Principles for Locally Led Adaptation

Lessons can be drawn from the **Principles for Locally Led Adaptation**, developed by the Global Commission on Adaptation based on over a year of consultations. The Principles have been endorsed by over 120 organisations (governments, leading global institutions and local and international NGOs).

The Principles:

1. **Devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level:** Giving local institutions and communities more direct access to finance and decision-making power over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritized, designed, implemented; how progress is monitored and how success is evaluated.
2. **Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, people with disabilities, people who are displaced, Indigenous Peoples and marginalized ethnic groups:** Integrating gender-based, economic and political inequalities that are root causes of vulnerability into the core of adaptation action and encouraging vulnerable and marginalized individuals to meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decisions.
3. **Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily:** Supporting long-term development of local governance processes, capacity and institutions through simpler access modalities, as well as longer term and more predictable funding horizons to ensure that communities can effectively implement adaptation actions.
4. **Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy:** Improving the capabilities of local institutions to ensure they can understand climate risks and uncertainties, generate solutions and facilitate and manage adaptation initiatives over the long term without being dependent on project-based donor funding.
5. **Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty:** Informing adaptation decisions through a combination of local, traditional, Indigenous, generational and scientific knowledge that can enable resilience under a range of future climate scenarios.
6. **Flexible programming and learning:** Enabling adaptive management to address the inherent uncertainty in adaptation, especially through robust monitoring and learning systems and flexible finance and programming.
7. **Ensuring transparency and accountability:** Making processes of financing, designing and delivering programs more transparent and accountable downward to local stakeholders.
8. **Collaborative action and investment:** Collaboration across sectors, initiatives and levels to ensure that different initiatives and different sources of funding (humanitarian assistance, development, disaster risk reduction, green recovery funds, etc.) support each other, and their activities avoid duplication to enhance efficiencies and good practice.

Source: (Global Commission on Adaptation, 2022)

Barriers to gender-responsive and socially-inclusive biodiversity finance

Development assistance finance which addresses the intersection of climate change, gender equality and biodiversity remains a fraction of total overseas development assistance (ODA). Many Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members lack specific, integrated targets for funding allocations which consider both gender equality and biodiversity outcomes (OECD,

2023; Songwe et al., 2022; UNEP, 2023). In 2019-20, where totals of US\$16 billion were provided in climate-related ODA, US\$34 billion in gender equality-related ODA, and US\$551 million in biodiversity-related ODA, overlaps in funding between climate change and gender equality considerations were US\$18 billion, with US\$3.9 billion for interventions addressing the intersection of climate change, biodiversity and gender equality, and only US\$491 million for projects working on both biodiversity and gender equality (OECD, 2023, p. 41).

Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) received less than one percent of ODA for climate change mitigation and adaptation between 2011-2020. There was also a decrease in levels of direct funding to IPLCs in 2022 (Forest Tenure Funders Group, 2022). Land tenure rights and access to natural resources are severely circumscribed, despite the increasing recognition of the custodial role of IPLCs, with an estimated 36 percent of the world's remaining 'intact' forests on Indigenous People's land (Forest Tenure Funders Group, 2022, 2023). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that fair and effective funding for forest conservation must prioritise the rights of forest communities, which entails in practice recognition of 'collective tenure systems and customary resource use practices that provide important mitigation functions and are now increasingly responding to adaptation needs' (Young, 2024, p. 7).

Gender barriers, exclusionary institutions and social norms inform limited access to resources through locally-led adaptation and inequitable benefits distribution. Limited control over natural resources and additional labour burdens, such as caring responsibilities, limit the benefits that women may receive from adaptation initiatives targeting fisheries, aquaculture, forestry and livestock investments (Despot-Belmonte et al., 2022; Forest Tenure Funders Group, 2023).

Next steps

Enhancing biodiversity finance provision may be an enabling factor for promoting transformative change, however, its articulation is modulated by contextual factors, including institutional norms, politics and power; **without attention to endemic structural factors, financing projects to meet biodiversity targets will have limited transformative effects** (OECD, 2023; Turnhout et al., 2021; Van Dijk et al., 2023; Young, 2024).

While not an exhaustive list, some key recommendations emerging in the literature for the provision of inclusive and effective biodiversity financing include:

- **Bringing the source of finance closer to Indigenous Peoples and local communities** and strengthening the capacities of heterogeneous social groups (not assuming that communities are necessarily homogenous groups with shared interests, or that benefits will be distributed evenly), to represent their constituencies in decision making, enabling locally relevant solutions (IDRC, 2024; Yami & Mekuria, 2022; Young, 2024).
- **Enhancing coordination between organisations at different levels to facilitate gender responsive implementation of funding allocations and promoting the ambition of biodiversity metrics.** For example, parties to the CBD exploring measures to enhance coordination for the implementation of the GBF; integrating gender considerations into NBSAPs; and sharing learning and best practices to

address data and implementation barriers at the local level, including simplifying funding application processes (Despot-Belmonte et al., 2022; Van Dijk et al., 2023).

- **Enacting long-term financial commitments and incentives** to signal policy commitment and address market uncertainty, while strengthening self-determination, redistributing power and financial resources, and addressing capacity limitations of receiving organisations or communities pursuing biodiversity objectives (Young, 2024).
- **Addressing factors which impede strong regulatory reforms to promoting biodiversity, including redressing perverse incentives.** This may include addressing entrenched corruption and lobbying by powerful actors to obstruct regulatory reform, removing and redirecting damaging public subsidies, and providing a clear sense of, and longevity in, policy purpose promoting biodiversity outcomes (Dempsey et al., 2021, p. 237; Songwe et al., 2022; Turnhout et al., 2021).
- **Addressing limiting factors for enhancing public financing for biodiversity, such as debt servicing, debt conditionalities that mandate austerity, low corporate tax rates, and tax evasion.** This may include adopting an international tax convention with minimum corporation taxation rates instituted globally, and international cohesion to address tax havens and evasion, which are estimated to cost governments up to US\$600 billion annually in lost taxation (Dempsey et al., 2021, p. 238; Songwe et al., 2022). An interim agreement reached by G7 countries for a minimum 15 percent tax rate for multinationals, while representing a modest achievement, is criticised as being far too low to equate the damage to biodiversity driven by multinational industries; in context, the funding required to preserve biodiversity globally is estimated to be between US\$722-967 billion per year (Dempsey et al., 2021, p. 238).
- **Aligning finance with strong metrics for evaluating and promoting gender inclusivity and addressing structural barriers to women's full participation in governance** is seen to be a key factor to promote the effectiveness of biodiversity finance. There is strong evidence to suggest that women's participation in governance improves climate and biodiversity outcomes (Despot-Belmonte et al., 2022; UNDP, 2016).

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