

Synergies Between Biodiversity- and Climate-Relevant Policy Frameworks and Their Implementation



A SERIES OF
THEMATIC PAPERS





Summary Paper

Synergies Between Biodiversity- and Climate-Relevant Policy Frameworks and Their Implementation

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Synergies Between Biodiversity- and Climate-Relevant Policy Frameworks and Their Implementation

There is growing recognition that the global climate and biodiversity crises are interlinked. Climate change has impacts on ecosystems and, together with land-use change, is among the main drivers of biodiversity loss. Without resolving the climate crisis, restoring biodiversity will not be possible. Furthermore, actions and policies that aim to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects can have negative impacts on biodiversity. In turn, biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use can contribute to climate change mitigation by enhancing ecosystems' capacity to sequester carbon and help adapt to climate change impacts through increasing ecosystem resilience.

The high degree of interdependence within living systems causes complex interplays at both the ecosystem and policy-making levels. This means that policy action (or lack thereof) to address climate change has impacts on biodiversity and vice versa. These linkages are showcased in recent major global assessments by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Policy efforts addressing both challenges in an integrated manner, however, still remain limited, although decision-makers and negotiators at relevant forums, including the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement, and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), are aware of the necessity of integrated approaches. The CBD Conference of

the Parties (COP) has been quite active in integrating climate change-related considerations in the CBD work, advancing technical work to enhance understanding of the linkages, addressing synergies as part of its agenda, and promoting coordination between secretariats. In the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement processes, until recently, parties had shown less willingness to integrate biodiversity considerations in their deliberations, with limited exceptions related to forests and land-use management regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives. Recent COP meetings, however, have witnessed a wave of increased recognition of nature's role within the climate regime, as well as the importance of synergizing with the fellow Rio Conventions, which can be seen as a promising step toward bridging the climate and biodiversity agendas.

There is a need to amplify the synergies between the two processes and make use of existing opportunities to translate such synergies into global policies and domestic implementation measures. This approach can lead to identifying options that achieve multiple benefits for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Recent policy developments under both processes can enable such amplification of synergies. Under the CBD, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted in 2022 to guide global biodiversity action to 2030 and beyond. The GBF features climate-related



objectives in Target 8 on minimizing the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and building resilience and Target 11 on nature's contributions to people. Several other targets contribute directly to climate change mitigation and adaptation goals or are indirectly relevant to climate action. In the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement contexts, recognition of the interlinked crises of climate change and biodiversity loss in the 2021 Glasgow Climate Pact was followed by recognition of the role of nature-based solutions (NbS) in the 2022 Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, integration of a thematic target on ecosystems and biodiversity in the 2023 UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience under the Global Goal on Adaptation of the Paris Agreement, and recognition of the importance of conserving and restoring nature and ecosystems, in line with the GBF, in the 2023 decision of the first global stocktake. A crucial step in building momentum for synergistic action has been the voluntary but landmark COP 28 joint statement on Climate, Nature and People, led by COP Presidencies of all Rio Conventions and endorsed by 18 countries from across the globe. These developments provide a good basis for synergistic action on the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss through national plans and strategies.

In 2024, **CBD Decision 16/22 on biodiversity and climate change** urged parties to the CBD to identify and maximize potential synergies between biodiversity and climate actions and to seek ways to enhance policy coherence to support the implementation of the Rio Conventions. The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) has also adopted two resolutions (**2024** and **2025**) related to promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant environmental instruments.

In response to the mandate of Decision 16/22, the CBD Secretariat organized a technical information exchange on enhancing policy coherence and cooperation across the Rio Conventions in June 2025, in collaboration with the UNFCCC and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification secretariats. CBD SBSTTA 27 provided an additional mandate for more technical information exchanges to further discuss options to enhance cooperation, policy coherence and synergies across the Rio conventions, and subsequently develop a multilevel road map with short, medium and long-term actions, including a mapping study to help to identify concrete actions. The outcome of the technical information exchanges, as well as the submission process, presented eight building blocks for enhancing synergies and policy coherence on climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation:



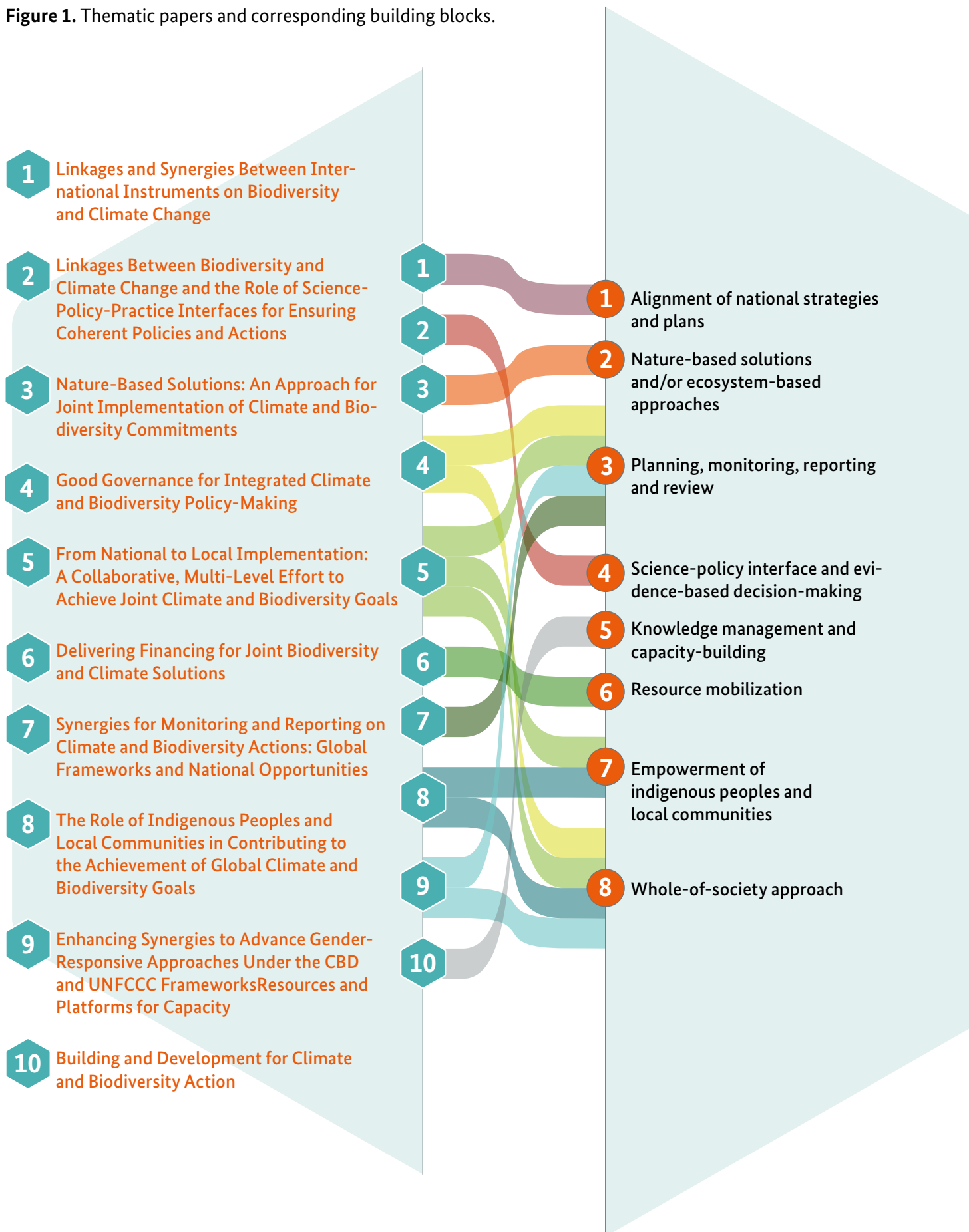
1. Alignment of national strategies and plans
2. Nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches
3. Planning, monitoring, reporting and review
4. Science-policy interface and evidence-based decision-making
5. Knowledge management and capacity-building
6. Resource mobilization
7. Empowerment of indigenous peoples and local communities
8. Whole-of-society approach

In this context, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), via the IKI-funded “Support Project for the Design and Implementation of the New Global Biodiversity Framework (BioFrame),” its successor “Support Project for Implementation Instruments of the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement (BioClima)” and the IKI-funded “Support Project for the implementation of the Paris Agreement (SPA),” the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), and Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) have developed a series of thematic papers illustrating synergies between biodiversity and climate change conventions and policies and their implementation at the national and local levels. To provide a comprehensive picture of relevant challenges while acknowledging that several issues remain open in the framework of ongoing intergovernmental negotiations, the papers correspond to the eight building blocks.





Figure 1. Thematic papers and corresponding building blocks.





The papers were authored by a team of policy advisors, researchers and practitioners with considerable experience in the field. Paper 1 was revised/updated in 2024, papers 2–6 in 2026 and papers 7–10 were newly added in the same year. The research methodology involved a review of academic and grey literature, as well as United Nations documentation, and interviews with selected resource persons. The papers have been through an extensive peer-review process. They aim to provide an overview, a sound scientific

basis, and inspirational examples and case studies of synergies between biodiversity and climate change commitments. The overall objective is to enhance the understanding and policy uptake of such synergies, including through NbS, their enabling conditions, and the support mechanisms required for joint implementation and mainstreaming of biodiversity and climate change policies. The intended audience is biodiversity and climate change negotiators, policy- and decision-makers, and practitioners.





Key Messages

Overall, the thematic papers highlight ample scientific evidence and existing policy opportunities to pursue a synergistic response to the interlinked crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. Coordinated policy responses to ensure such synergies, however, are still scarce. Some of the key messages include the following:

- Legal tools and policy mechanisms that can support synergies between the CBD, the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, as well as the coordinated implementation of the biodiversity and climate commitments, currently exist but are not used to their full effect. The Joint Liaison Group between the Rio Conventions represents a notable example. While the CBD COP has been quite active in addressing climate-related considerations, parties to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement should focus more on integrating biodiversity considerations into their deliberations. Recent developments, including adoption of the GBF and further decisions e.g. on climate change, cooperation, resource mobilization under the CBD and increased recognition of the role of nature in addressing climate change under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, e.g. in the first global stocktake provide the necessary policy space to strengthen such synergies in the overall context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The urgency for action for addressing climate change and biodiversity loss requires coherent policy approaches that support transformative instead of incremental changes. These synergies need to be addressed more strategically, in particular in the update and implementation of nationally determined contributions (NDCs), national adaptation plans (NAPs), long-term strategies, and national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs).
- Science can provide robust knowledge, tools, and methods for assessing the interlinkages between climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development and contribute to participatory decision-making processes for navigating synergies, trade-offs, and uncertainties. Science-policy processes bringing together actors with different knowledge on climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development can support the co-creation and implementation of more integrated policies and actions from the local to the global level, and reduce trade-offs with other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- NbS is an overarching concept embracing ecosystem-based approaches for climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as ecosystem restoration and disaster risk reduction. While it builds on the CBD's Ecosystem Approach as strategy for integrated



management, NbS is more action oriented and aspirational for social and economic outcomes and underscores the role of ecosystem management for sustainable development. The concept can be used to support communication and mainstreaming of biodiversity values beyond the conservation community. Greater clarity and precision are required to ensure the effective deployment of NbS. Core standards have been developed to guide the concept's relationship with other approaches and its implementation on the ground, as well as to address concerns regarding the lack of outcome delivery for biodiversity over climate.

- Reorganizing governance processes is at the heart of the transformative action required to solve the climate and biodiversity crises. Challenges remain in the meaningful representation of Indigenous Peoples' views in climate policy and action and in recognizing their rights over resources in land and seascapes. National governments play an important role in the full inclusion of sub-national state and non-state actors through just multi-level governance. As long as capacities and systems are in place to promote the sound management of resources at local levels, subnational state and non-state actors can contribute to change at higher levels.
- Approaches to ensure good governance for integrated decision making also include a range of rights-based approaches, inter-institutional and multistakeholder cooperation mechanisms, means to enhance accountabil-

ity, and tools for mainstreaming biodiversity and climate considerations into development planning and sectoral policies.

- Directing and coordinating climate and biodiversity finance through joint international mechanisms, integrated national budgeting, and safeguarded, rights-based investments like NbS can unlock joint benefits, reduce trade-offs and overall financing needs, and drive more effective, coherent action on both agendas.

At the national level, countries must identify synergies among national climate and biodiversity goals and integrate them into budgetary processes to ensure the consistency of goals, better harmonization of donor funding, and greater involvement of the private sector. This can facilitate strategic investments, enable smart use of resources, and deliver joint benefits. Determination of the right financial measures and incentives needs to be embedded in regulatory frameworks that advance greater domestic coordination in implementation and budget planning to maximize synergies and minimize trade-offs.

- Policies need to allow for and enhance change at the system level, especially to ensure sustainable global production and consumption. Addressing the root causes of the alarming current state of climate and biodiversity is paramount for achieving the SDGs—a challenging but worthwhile task for the next decade.



→ The transformation required also depends on a radical redesign of the financial system, on scrutinizing the impacts of trade and investment agreements, and on addressing vested interests, corruption, and power asymmetries. Building the necessary political will remains the single most important prerequisite for the transformative actions required to address global challenges in a synergistic way.

→ The coming years offer a pivotal, time-limited opportunity to align the transparency systems of the biodiversity and climate regimes. As countries prepare their 7th CBD national reports which will feed into the GBF global review at COP 17 and the second Paris Agreement biennial transparency reports that will feed into the 2027–2028 global stocktake, there is a real window of opportunity to further harmonize indicators, definitions, and methodologies across the GBF monitoring framework, the ETF, and the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, where feasible, before national systems become locked in. By adopting good practices countries can reduce reporting burden, improve data quality and policy coherence, and build an integrated evidence base that demonstrates how biodiversity and climate action reinforce one another. Gender equality is foundational to effective and lasting biodiversity and climate action as both crises deepen existing inequalities, while inclusive, gender-responsive governance leads to more ambitious and equitable outcomes.

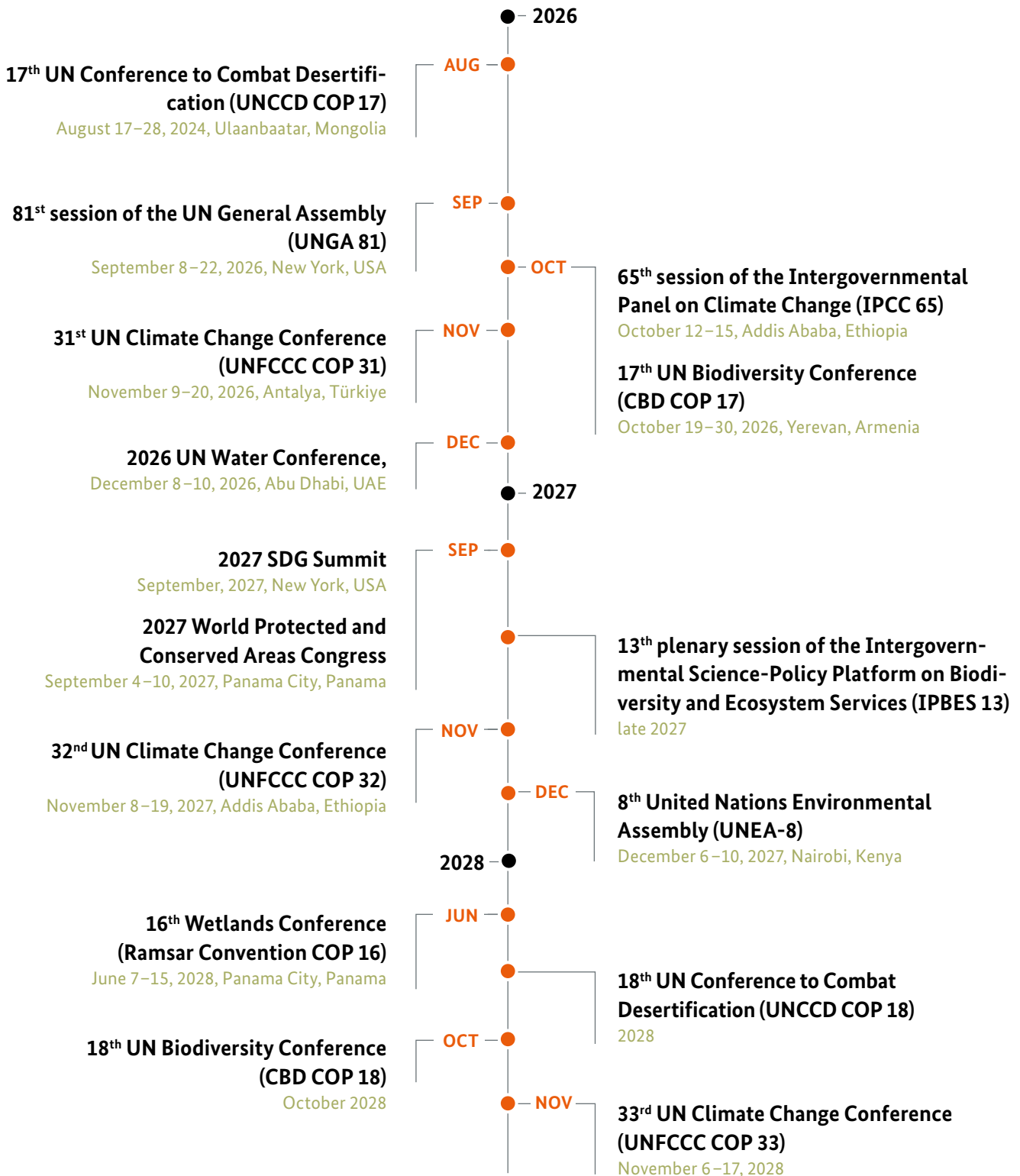
The complementary gender mandates of the UNFCCC and CBD create a strong foundation for synergistic progress, and integrating gender-responsive approaches into NDCs, NAPs, and NBSAPs. It requires that policies account not only for gender inequality but for the ways it intersects with other systems of inequity, such as racism, ableism, and ageism, which together shape vulnerability to climate change and biodiversity loss.

→ Capacity building and development at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels is a key means of implementation for the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, and the CBD and its GBF. They are a prerequisite for strengthening climate-biodiversity synergies and policy coherence. Yet capacity building and development efforts remain siloed. While synergies-focused initiatives have emerged, they focus on knowledge exchange and guidance rather than sustained, country-level outcomes. Five key gaps constrain integrated action: institutional governance and coordination; technical capacity for designing integrated solutions; technical capacity for aligned monitoring, evaluation, and reporting; finance mobilization; and whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches, including gender-responsive planning and implementation. Addressing these gaps requires sustained, targeted investment across all three capacity levels: individuals, institutions and systems.



Policy Opportunities to Promote Synergistic Decision Making

A timeline of events presenting opportunities to promote the need for synergistic decision making to address the biodiversity and climate crises:





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