



What does it take to operationalize Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Policy Practice?

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Definition:

- › Mainstreaming biodiversity is the **process of integrating biodiversity considerations in the policies, practices and economic activities** that affect or depend on nature and its services (CBD, 2021).

Caveats:

- › Tendency to underestimate leverage points *within* government
- › Mainstreaming in policy practice is not straightforward nor clearcut.
- › Inherent to mainstreaming is that it requires action from those who are not (yet) aware/concerned or engaged on the topic.

Thematic Inquiries: Themes and Methods

Food System Transformation

- Narrative analysis (report)
- Stakeholder dialogues (3)

Ecological Planning

- Literature Review (report)
- Country level policy dialogues (2)

Financial Flows

- Participant observation
- In-depth interviews (3)

Reimagining Governance

- RIPPLE: More-Than-Human Futures methodology
- Country level multi-actor dialogues (2)

Key messages

- › Biodiversity Mainstreaming requires transformative change ***within government***; both in policy practice and in institutional context.
- › Operationalizing Biodiversity Mainstreaming in policy practice relies on a mix of **individual agency, collective processes** and **institutional support**.
- › Research and facilitation methods can provide **entry points for a transformative change lens on BM** (addressing *values, practices, structures*); with emphasis on reflexivity and accountability in policy practice.
- › **Dual approach towards operationalizing BM in policy practice is needed.** Strengthen (existing) skills and strategies of individual policy makers and create institutional leverage points for structural support (i.e. civil servant training, checks in policy cycle, interministerial coordination)

A Transformative Change lens for BM

IPBES definition (2025): *Transformative change is defined as fundamental, system-wide shifts in views, structures and practices.*

*Deliberate transformative change for a just and sustainable world shifts **views**, **structures** and **practices** in ways that address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and nature's decline.*

- › *Views: Ways of thinking, knowing and seeing*
- › *Practices: Ways of doing, behaving and relating*
- › *Structures: Ways of organizing, regulating and governing*

Biodiversity Mainstreaming Tasks

Exploring the meaning of biodiversity

- Conceptually
- In systems context
- Plural values & knowledges
- Spatially and culturally location specific

Positioning biodiversity

Questioning and defining policy scope, purpose and intent of integrating biodiversity in societal challenge(s);

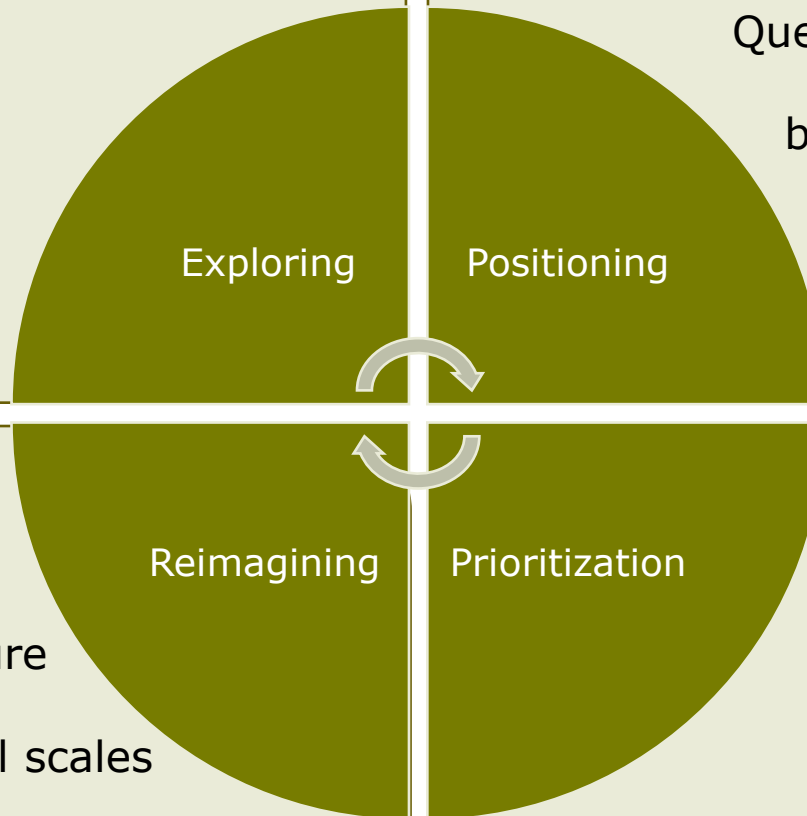
- explicitly clarifying which interests, needs, risks are included or excluded

Reimagining

- Recognizing how governance structures affect human-nature relationship
- Expansion of time and spatial scales
- More-than-human dimension
- Nature centric ways of knowing

Prioritization

Reasoning and logic how values, interests, dependencies and consequences are framed and weighed in decisionmaking, throughout the policy cycle.





Partners in this research:





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Guiding questions for panel reflections

1. How do you think about the link between transformative change and biodiversity mainstreaming, and do you think it is a relevant entry point?
2. From your experience, what does mainstreaming require in policy practice? What is the one critical element we are missing?
3. In your own work on biodiversity mainstreaming, what challenge have you overcome and how?

Guiding questions for panel reflections

4. What has been instrumental in the way of working to increase engagement and enhance understanding for biodiversity mainstreaming?
5. What are institutional ways to strengthen agency and skills of policymakers for biodiversity mainstreaming?
6. What is a key lesson on biodiversity mainstreaming that you can share from your organization / country perspective?



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Toolbox

Research and facilitation methods toolbox

Method	Description	Relevance in policy practice
Narrative analysis	Narrative analysis is an analytical tool which reveals the underlying assumptions, priorities, and values in spoken words and written text. Narratives guide or frame proposed interventions and determine whose voices are amplified or silenced. By paying attention to the spectrum of narratives, differences and overlap in how problems, solutions and actors are framed becomes clear. Diversity of narratives enriches the scope of information and knowledge on both the physical reality as well as the experienced reality of systems and actors, providing insight on dependencies, relations, motivations and meaning within (sub)systems and among actors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increased awareness and knowledge of diversity of perspectives, values and meanings.- Makes visible biases and blind spots, within people as well as in the existing (scientific) evidence base.- Reveals (hidden) power dynamics and shared (meta) values to transcend or effectively deal with existing divisions and conflicting interests.- Offers entry points for navigating fragmented debates, enabling more strategic and collaborative approaches to deliberately position and integrate biodiversity in other policy domains.
Deconstructing language and concepts	The intentional practice of breaking down words and ideas to show that their meaning is not fixed, but plural and constituted of different parts. This practice reveals the diverse meanings behind words and ideas, including hidden assumptions and personal beliefs that shape interpretation and understanding. It recognizes the power of language to guide and constrain thinking, both in policy context itself as well as in society at large	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sensitivity to how policy concepts reverberate in society, fuel tensions or increase legitimacy.- Questioning concepts, reconsidering meaning and creating new concepts through participatory processes is a way of working that can provide guidance and structure in the policy process when orchestrated in close collaboration with relevant actors and societal stakeholders.



Method	Description	Relevance in policy practice
Dialogue	Dialogue is an interaction between two or more individuals. It can be facilitated as a structured form of collective communication, in which perspectives are shared and the focus is on deep listening, shared understanding and collaborative learning. Dialogue is as much a process of interaction as it is a process of reflection, in which we learn from other viewpoints, experiences and values. Dialogue does not seek to achieve consensus or convince others, but it has the power to create a collective space through participation, inclusion, respect and tolerance. This is a foundation for trust and shared ideas underpinning legitimacy and effectiveness of policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- within teams or divisions, to foster a culture to openly exchange about different perspectives and meanings, to keep an open mind and consider ideas beyond your own set of beliefs.- working across policy domains, between ministries, on complex subjects that require context specific, systemic approaches.- to engage effectively with societal stakeholders and with different levels of government institutions and implementing agencies, to challenges policy perspectives with grounded experiences.- for learning from other (country) contexts, where issues and practices might be very different, but lessons and insights can be shared and exchanged
Subsidy reform and NBFP	Two existing methods to track and redirect financial flows that are piloted in multiple countries are 1) Identification of Environmental Harmful Subsidies. This methodology enables a structured assessment of public financial and fiscal measures to identify their direct and indirect impact on biodiversity, both positive as negative. Findings of this assessment are the starting point for subsidy reform. 2) National Biodiversity Finance Plan is a strategic framework at national level that countries create to identify, mobilize and direct funding needed to protect nature and meet national biodiversity goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- tracking and redirecting financial flows in public and private expenditures is an effective lever to position and prioritize biodiversity considerations.- the more central such effort is undertaken within government, the stronger the leverage in anchoring biodiversity considerations in policy and planning, since it determines availability of funding or approval.- Green Budgeting is an example where ecological considerations are centrally coordinated by the Ministry of Finance, where environmental goals are integrated in standard public financial management.



Method	Description	Relevance in policy practice
RIPPLE By: Living Imaginaries	RIPPLE is participatory method working across ecosystems, institutions, and mandates to reflect on how governance is shaped and how it could be practiced differently. RIPPLE starts from a relational understanding. It recognizes that governance always takes place within living systems, not outside them, and supports attention to ecological relationships, dependencies, and limits, as well as to how non-human beings and processes shape what is possible, sustainable, or just. Each RIPPLE process is shaped by the specific ecosystems, species, histories, and relationships present in a given context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- this method provides a structured, future-led way for institutions and communities to examine and reshape the imaginaries guiding their decisions, and to design governance based on the futures they want to become reality.- imaginaries bring deep assumptions underpinning governance to the surface and challenges our creativity to think of different ways of seeing, being and governing in relation with the non-human world.

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