Supporting Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to Prepare for Updating the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

"Technical Support for the Global Biodiversity Framework Early Action Support"

Checklist of key policies related to elements of GBF, and options for policy coherence[1]

1. Introduction

Component 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) Early Action Support (EAS) project provides support for policy and institutional alignment and review for achieving coherence with the GBF. This guidance document provides an overview of policy coherence in the context of multilateral environment agreements, and more particularly, the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Following the overview, the guidance document includes a checklist of key policies related to the common elements outlined in Decision 15/4 as well as the relevant building blocks for achieving policy coherence. It integrates relevant plans and strategies associated with the GBF such as monitoring framework, resource mobilization strategy, capacity building strategy, gender plan of action, and the role of indigenous peoples and local communities.

In Decision 15/4, "The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is built around a theory of change which recognizes that urgent policy action is required globally, regionally and nationally to achieve sustainable development so that the drivers of undesirable change that have exacerbated biodiversity loss will be reduced and/or reversed to allow for the recovery of all ecosystems and to achieve the Convention's Vision of living in harmony with nature by

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[1] Based on Draft Guidance "Ensuring policy coherence supports effective implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)."

2050." Further, "The Framework promotes coherence, complementarity and cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols, other biodiversity related conventions, and other relevant multilateral agreements and international institutions, respecting their mandates, and creates opportunities for cooperation and partnerships among diverse actors to enhance implementation of the Framework."

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines policy coherence for development as "an approach to integrate the dimensions of sustainable development throughout domestic and international policy-making. …by: (i) fostering synergies and maximizing benefits across economic, social, and environmental policy areas, (ii) balancing domestic policy objectives with internationally recognized sustainable development goals, and (iii) addressing the transboundary and long-term impacts of policies, including those likely to affect developing countries"[2]. As custodian of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, which includes target 17.14 on policy coherence, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) defines it as "the coherence between policies in general that cover the dimensions of sustainable development".

1.1 Relevance of Policy Coherence for MEA Implementation

Policy coherence plays a crucial role in effectively implementing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). These agreements are designed to address complex global environmental challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, and they involve multiple countries working together to achieve shared goals. To ensure successful implementation, policy coherence is essential at both the national and international levels.
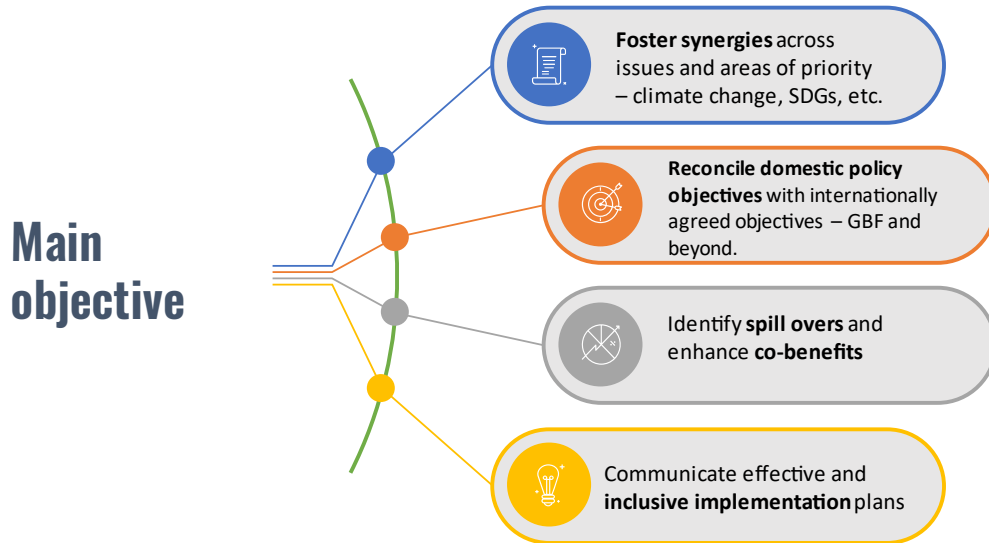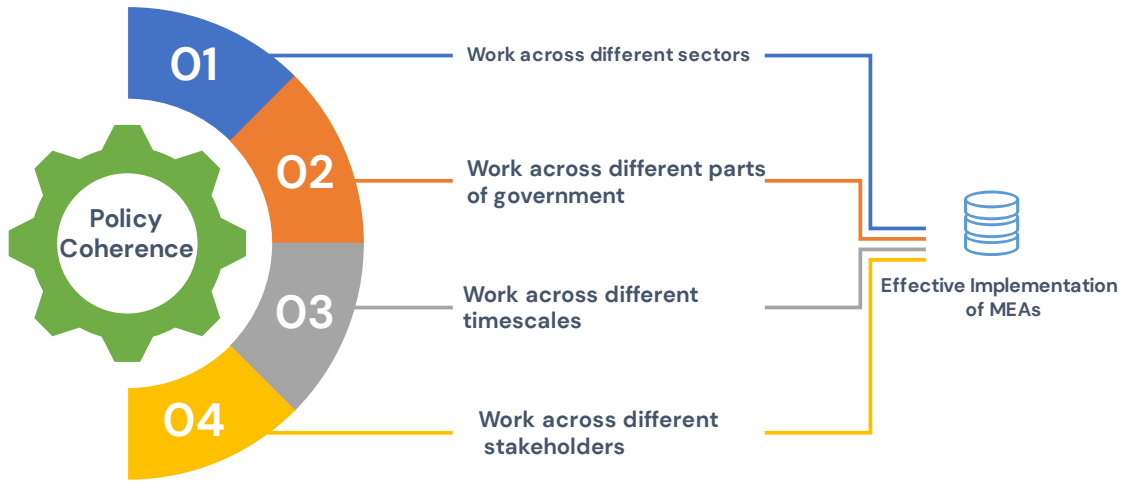
The figures below illustrate how the focus can be taken beyond the SDGs for the effective implementation of multilateral environment agreements, and the achievement of multiple objectives in a coherent manner.

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[2] https://www.oecd.org/gov/pcsd/Coherence%20for%20Development_Issue_9.pdf

Policy Coherence and MEAs

Taking the focus beyond SDGs

UN environment programme

- O1 — Work across different sectors
- O2 — Work across different parts of government
- O3 — Work across different timescales
- O4 — Work across different stakeholders

Policy Coherence

Effective Implementation of MEAs

UN environment programme

Main objective

- **Foster synergies** across issues and areas of priority – climate change, SDGs, etc.
- **Reconcile domestic policy objectives** with internationally agreed objectives – GBF and beyond.
- Identify **spill overs** and enhance **co-benefits**
- Communicate effective and **inclusive implementation** plans
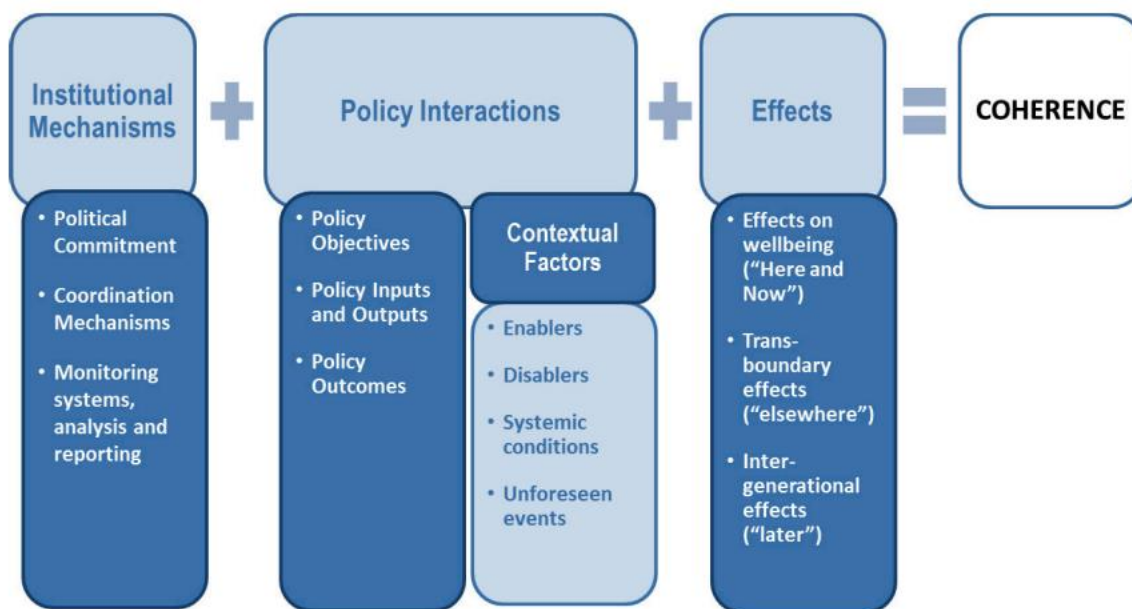
If there is one over-arching discussion and negotiation that is common across all the MEAs, irrespective of their focal area, is that of financing implementation. The billions of dollars being assessed as the need for implementation is many times beyond the current scale available to environmental management experts, and the level of focus for most financing experts. The competing demands of development and debt servicing, for example, are high on the agenda of

national economic and finance planning making investments in environment pushed to one of the last in the series of priorities at national level.

Perverse investments (incentives and subsidies) exceed positive investments manyfold. There is an estimated need for about US$ 4,000 billion per year to 2030[3] in total finance for sustaining healthy natural capital and to address climate change, yet only around US$ 700 billion per year has been committed,[4] even though the International Energy Agency and the OECD estimate that fossil fuel subsidies total more than US$ 600 billion per year[5] and that governments spend another US$ 500 billion per year in support of activities that are potentially harmful to biodiversity[6].

(Source: Better Policies for Sustainable Development 2016: A New Framework for PCSD, OECD, 2016).

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[3] IEA, 2021. *World Energy Outlook 2021*. International Energy Agency, Paris.
[4] UNEP, 2021. *State of Finance for Nature*. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi.
[5] Koplow, D., & Steenblik, R., 2022. *Protecting Nature by Reforming Environmentally Harmful Subsidies: The Role of Business*. Earth Track, Cambridge, MA.
[6] OECD, 2020. *A Comprehensive Overview of Global Biodiversity Finance*. OECD Publishing, Paris.

1.2 Policy coherence for the GBF implementation

Decision 15/4 states that "The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is built around a theory of change which recognizes that urgent policy action is required globally, regionally and nationally to achieve sustainable development so that the drivers of undesirable change that have exacerbated biodiversity loss will be reduced and/or reversed to allow for the recovery of all ecosystems and to achieve the Convention's Vision of living in harmony with nature by 2050." Targets 13, 15, 16 and 23 outline what those urgent policy actions entail, all in agreement with Article 6(b) of the Convention.

Decision 15/6 "Encourages Parties to adopt the revised or updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans as policy and/or legal instruments and to mainstream them (or elements thereof) with broader strategies and plans, such as national sustainable development plans, national development plans, poverty reduction strategies and other relevant national sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, in line with national circumstances and priorities."

Decision 15/8 states that "The enhanced planning, reporting and review mechanism should consider the capacity-building and development dimension. The guidelines for national reporting by Governments should also include provisions for reporting on capacity-building and development and provide opportunities for countries to share experiences and lessons learned. The review and revision process of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the voluntary peer review of their implementation should also include a review of the capacity-building and development strategies and approaches in line with decision 15/6 on planning, monitoring, reporting and review of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework."
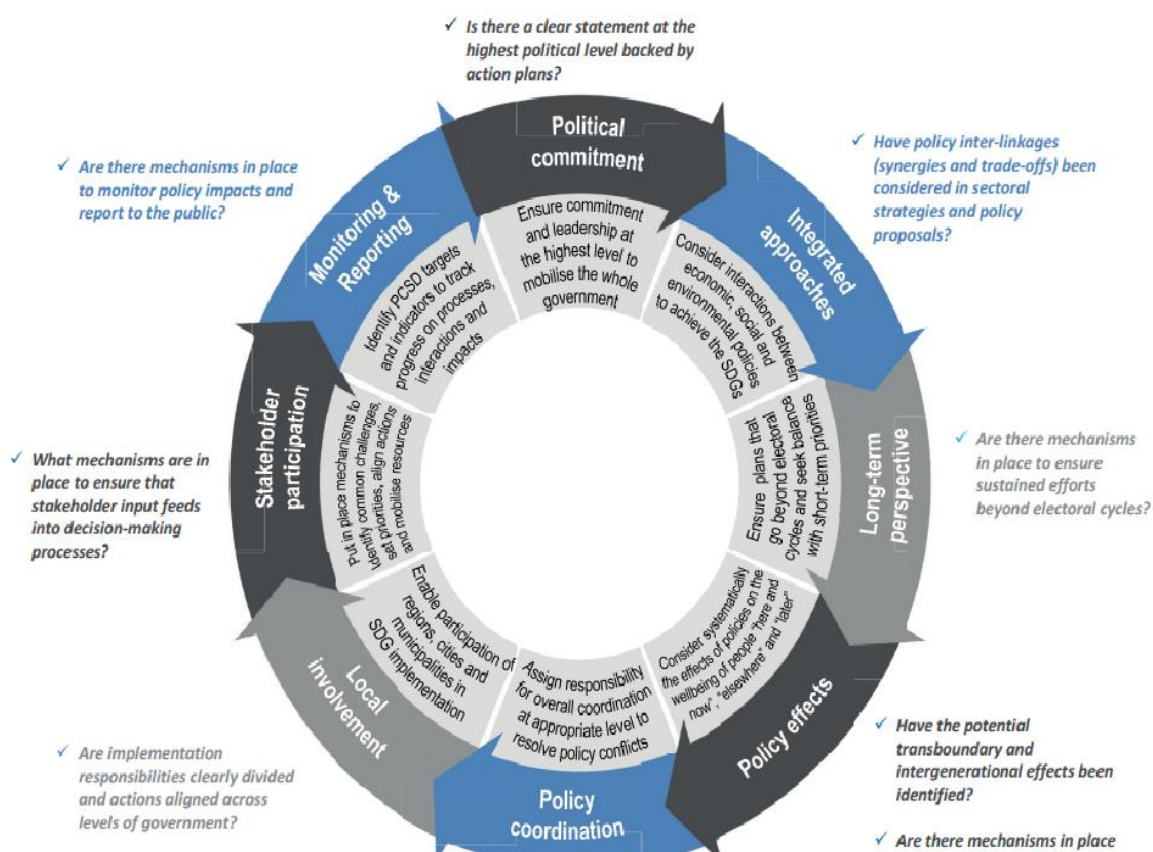
2. Elements of the GBF and options for policy coherence

Decision 15/4 speaks to the following elements for the successful implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework requires responsibility and transparency, which will be supported by effective mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review:

(a) National biodiversity strategies and action plans, revised or updated in alignment with the Framework and its goals and targets as the main vehicle for implementation of the Framework, including national targets communicated in a standardized format;

(b) National reports, including the headline and, as appropriate, other indicators in the monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

(c) Global analysis of information in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, including national targets to assess the contribution towards the Framework;

(d) Global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Framework, including the means of implementation, based on national reports and, as appropriate, other sources;

(e) Voluntary peer reviews;

(f) Further development and testing of an open-ended forum for voluntary country reviews;

(g) Information on non-state actor commitments towards the Framework, as applicable.

For the purpose of this guidance document, the common elements d, e and f mentioned above are not considered. Common elements a, b, c and g, and the relevant building blocks for policy coherence (see figure below) are used to build the checklist of key policies related to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Table 1).

Source: Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development 2017: Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity, OECD (2017).

Table 1. Checklist of key policies related to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Elements of the GBF	Relevant Building blocks	Checklist
Common elements (Decision 15/4)		
Revised and updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans	Political commitment	Is there political will and recognition at the highest level of government for the GBF in your country?
		Is your country applying the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to national implementation proposed in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to galvanize capacity-building and development for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the global biodiversity goals and targets?
		Have focal points of the Rio conventions, biodiversity-related conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals, and representatives of line ministries and sectors in your country adopted a road map for alignment and coordinated action?
	Integrated approaches Policy coordination Policy effects	Is the NBSAP process in your country able to ensure inter-ministerial coordination and vertical integration?
		Is your country taking policy measures to encourage integrated planning and management for sustainability at the landscape and seascape levels?

		What policy measures are there in your country to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits? Are these measures effective (are benefits being shared)? If not, what are the underlying reasons? In what way could their effectiveness be improved?
		Is there implementation of cross-sectoral approaches that consider linkages and interconnections between sectoral policies and actions in your country?
	Policy effects	Are capacity-building and development interventions planned and delivered as an integral part of your country's strategic plans, ongoing human resources and organizational development and knowledge management, organizational learning, mentorship and peer-to-peer support, nurturing of communities of practice, and systematic sharing of experiences, best practices and lessons learned?
		Is your country improving existing policy instruments and using them strategically and synergistically in smart policy mixes?
		What policy measures are in place in your country to ensure that women and girls have equal access to land and

		resources? How can these be improved or strengthened?
	Long-term perspective	What are the opportunities and constraints to enhancing sustainable management of agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry in your country? What are the potential ecological, economic, and social costs and benefits of enhancing sustainable management?
		Is there mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across different sectors (e.g., agriculture, forestry, fisheries, mining, tourism) in your country?
		Is your country incorporating environmental and socioeconomic impacts, including externalities, into public and private decision-making?
	Local involvement	Is your country enabling the inclusion and participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, and women and girls in environmental governance? Are steps being taken to ensure recognition and respect of the knowledge, innovations, and practices, institutions and values of indigenous peoples and local communities, in accordance with national legislation? Which of the expected outcomes, objectives and actions of the Gender

		Plan of Action are included in the biodiversity target setting?
		Is your country improving collaboration and participation among indigenous peoples and local communities, other relevant stakeholders, policymakers and scientists to generate novel ways of conceptualizing and achieving transformative change towards sustainability?
	Stakeholder participation	Is your country recognizing and enabling the expression of different value systems and diverse interests while formulating and implementing policies and actions?
		Is your country facilitating national recognition for land tenure, access and resource rights of indigenous people and local communities in accordance with national legislation, and the application of free, prior and informed consent and fair and equitable benefit-sharing arising from their use?
National reports, including the headline and, as appropriate, other indicators in the monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.	Political commitment	Is your country improving monitoring and enforcement of existing laws and policies through better documentation and information-sharing and regular, informed and adaptive readjustments to ensure transparent and enhanced results as appropriate?
	Integrated approaches	Is your country improving the documentation of nature (e.g.,

		biodiversity inventory and other inventories) and the assessment of the multiple values of nature, including the valuation of natural capital by both private and public entities?
		Are there efforts in your country to advance knowledge co-production and including and recognizing different types of knowledge, including indigenous and local knowledge and education, that enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of environmental policies?
	Stakeholder participation	Is your country taking steps to involve relevant stakeholders in the in the revision and updating of the NBSAP in alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework? Are contributions from non-State actors clearly identified?
	Monitoring and reporting	What policy measures are in place in your country to encourage the monitoring, assessment and disclosure of business risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity? Are there requirements for large as well as transnational companies and financial institutions? Do these account for supply chains and portfolios? How effective

		have these been? How could their effectiveness be improved?
		Is your country developing and implementing adaptive management systems for monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity capacity-building and development efforts, to assess whether the intended capacity results are achieved in an impactful and sustainable manner, to identify and correct mistakes, and to capture and share good practices and lessons?
Global analysis of information in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, including national targets to assess the contribution towards the Framework	Monitoring and reporting Stakeholder participation	Is your country promoting public access to relevant information as appropriate in decision-making and responsiveness to assessments by improving monitoring, including setting goals and objectives with multiple relevant stakeholders, who often have competing interests?
	Integrated approaches	Is your country supporting capacity-building and development, with a view to addressing institutional and technical constraints that could undermine access to and transfer of technology, access to scientific and technical cooperation, and the effective participation in biotechnological research, in line with Article 19 of the Convention?
	Local involvement	Is your country engaging the private sector, proactively and as appropriate, in the development of national capacities,

		as many technical and financial resources and relevant expertise and technologies lie in the hands of private entities?
Information on non-state actor commitments towards the Framework, as applicable.	Integrated approaches	What legal, administrative or policy measures are in place in your country to encourage businesses to provide information to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns? How effective have these been? How could their effectiveness be improved?
	Long-term perspective	Is there an existing mechanism or is your country developing a mechanism for tracking commitments of non-State actors?

Elements to be assessed in the alignment of existing NBSAPs and their targets with the GBF (Decision 15/6)

Implementation gaps	Policy effects	What policy measures are being taken in your country to address the technological, technical and institutional capability gaps?
		What policy measures are in place in your country to encourage compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations and measures? How effective have these been? How could their effectiveness be improved?
		Who are the actors that may be affected by these policy measures? How can they

		be involved, and their needs addressed? What are the trade-offs to consider?
Existing goals, targets, and indicators	Integrated approaches	Is your country undertaking context-specific assessments and stocktaking processes to identify existing goals, targets and indicators that could be carried over to the revised and updated NBSAP?
The effectiveness of past actions	Monitoring and reporting	Is your country able to provide examples or cases to illustrate the effectiveness of past actions taken to implement particular national biodiversity goals or targets?
Monitoring systems	Long-term perspectives	Is your country aligning national monitoring with the United Nations System of Environmental-Economic Accounting statistical standard in order to mainstream biodiversity in national statistical systems and to strengthen national monitoring systems and reporting as appropriate and according to their national priorities and circumstances?
Sectoral and cross-sectoral policies	Policy effects	Is your country undertaking policy reforms across sectors to eliminate siloed decision-making for the promotion of integration across sectors and jurisdictions?

		What policy measures are in place in your country to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources, digital sequence information and traditional knowledge?
Finances and other means of implementation	Policy coordination	What additional resources (financial, human and technical) will be required to reach the national targets in your country?
		What are the main sources of biodiversity financing in your country? What are possible additional funding sources?
How stakeholders, indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth were involved in the revision and implementation?	Political commitment	Is your country considering the provision of a "one-stop service center" for all relevant stakeholders to access technical and scientific knowledge, expertise, tools and other resources, taking into account the science, technology and innovation capability gaps identified by your country?

3. Options for policy coherence

Decision 15/4 states that "The Framework promotes coherence, complementarity and cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols, other biodiversity related conventions, and other relevant multilateral agreements and international institutions, respecting their mandates, and creates opportunities for cooperation and partnerships among diverse actors to enhance implementation of the Framework." Options for policy coherence are captured in Table 2, and the suggested activities and tools for ensuring policy coherence at the national level, in Table 3.

Table 2: Examples of actions − policy coherence and the GBF.

Level of action	Example of action
1. **Updating NBSAPs**	Coherence in focal areas (climate change, SDGs, food systems, sustainable harvesting and use, trade, and investments.
2. **Setting new national targets**	Target setting based on integrated approaches using existing policies (e.g. agriculture, financing, etc.).
3. **Developing implementation plans**	Making whole of government approach work.
4. **Dealing with financing**	New approaches to financing plans, using climate, nature and blue economy finance policies, where available and develop new ones where needed.
5. **Whole of government approach**	Policy coherence a key driver for the approach.
6. **Result assessment**	Review of individual policy assessment and reporting.
7. **Impact assessment**	Review of collective policy impacts.

Practical example:

As the financial mechanism for the CBD, its Protocols and some other biodiversity related conventions, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) identifies two key objectives for the GEF: achieving better integration by maximizing synergies and managing trade-offs while achieving better durability of outcomes by minimizing negative spillovers[7]. In the GEF-8 Strategic Positioning Framework, policy coherence is defined most broadly as "the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving the agreed objectives".[8]

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[7] The GEF, 2022. Policy coherence for the GEF. A STAP information brief, the GEF, Washington, D.C.
[8] GEF, 2022. "GEF-8 Strategic Positioning Framework". Global Environment Facility, Washington, D.C.

Table 3. Examples of activities and tools in support of ensuring policy coherence at national level [9]

Level of Action	Example activities and tools
1. Projects	*Avoiding undermining of environmental benefits* • Analysis of national policies to avoid funding where incoherence may cause negative spillovers or leakages. • Scenario planning and foresight analyses for policy coherence (including integrated finance planning frameworks) *Maximizing return on investment* • Analysis of national policy coherence to target projects that capture maximum co-investment and synergies across environmental benefits as well as co-benefits
2. Integrated Programs and focal areas	*Prioritizing program development on topics with relevant policy coherence* • Analysis of policies at country or global level for program topics (e.g. biodiversity, land degradation, climate change and others) in target regions. • Analysis of vertical and horizontal coherence, as well as inter-organizational and inter-donor coherence *Supporting capacity-building in target countries* • Learning from the SDG (17.14.1) experiences in dealing with policy coherence for sustainable development • South–South knowledge exchange on improving policy coherence around key environmental benefits. • Engagement of national focal points, as well as development ministries, on Integrated Program topic, including with UN Country Teams at national level.

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[9] Modified after The GEF, 2022. Policy coherence for the GEF. A STAP information brief, the GEF, Washington, D.C

	• Integrated planning across government agencies, and implementation of whole of government approaches
3. Integrated finances	• Pooled funding for policy coherence (e.g. applied as innovation funding to learn how to address perverse incentives and harmful subsidies) • Embedding of policy coherence considerations in the Knowledge Management and Learning Strategy • Embedding of policy coherence considerations in the Results-based Management Framework
4. Work with partnerships	• Country focal point capacity-building (e.g. for convening cross-government discussions to identify perverse incentives) • General engagement between country focal points and their national focal points for different MEAs, as well as development ministries. • Facilitation of an alliance of countries to apply natural capital accounting. • Support or strengthening legislators' access to data and information on MEAs; strengthening the involvement of legislative bodies in metric setting for environmental benefits. • Support of caucus efforts to strengthen collaboration between legislative and executive branches to maximize coherence among laws and policies
5. Work with MEAs and other global processes	• Support of development and application of approaches like land degradation neutrality that enable countries to implement and track aspects of policy coherence practically. • Engagement in global decision-making bodies (e.g. United Nations Environment Assembly) or platforms (e.g. Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and others) where

	synergies and collaborations across the MEAs can be harnessed to strengthen policy coherence planning and actions

4. Key recommendations

1. **Enhanced International Cooperation**: MEAs require international cooperation and collaboration among countries. Policy coherence promotes harmonization and coordination between countries, making it easier to share information, resources, and best practices. It helps reduce misunderstandings, disagreements, and disputes between nations, fostering a more effective and efficient implementation of the agreements.

2. **Addressing Cross-Sectoral and Cross-Border Issues**: Environmental challenges often transcend borders and involve multiple sectors within a country. Policy coherence helps bridge the gap between different government departments, ministries, and agencies that have responsibilities related to environmental issues. By breaking down silos and promoting interagency cooperation, it becomes easier to address cross-cutting challenges comprehensively.

3. **Allocating Resources Effectively**: MEAs often require financial and technical resources to be successful. Policy coherence assists in identifying and mobilizing resources efficiently, ensuring that they are channeled toward the most critical areas for environmental protection. It also aids in avoiding duplication of efforts and wastage of resources.

4. **Strengthening Compliance and Enforcement:** Policy coherence supports the establishment of strong compliance and enforcement mechanisms for MEAs. When national policies are in harmony with international commitments, it becomes easier to monitor and enforce compliance with the agreements' provisions. Effective enforcement is crucial for ensuring that countries fulfill their obligations and contribute to global environmental goals.

5. **Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement**: A coherent policy framework encourages active involvement and engagement of various stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, and local communities. When all stakeholders are on board and have a clear understanding of the goals and strategies, they can actively contribute to the implementation of MEAs.
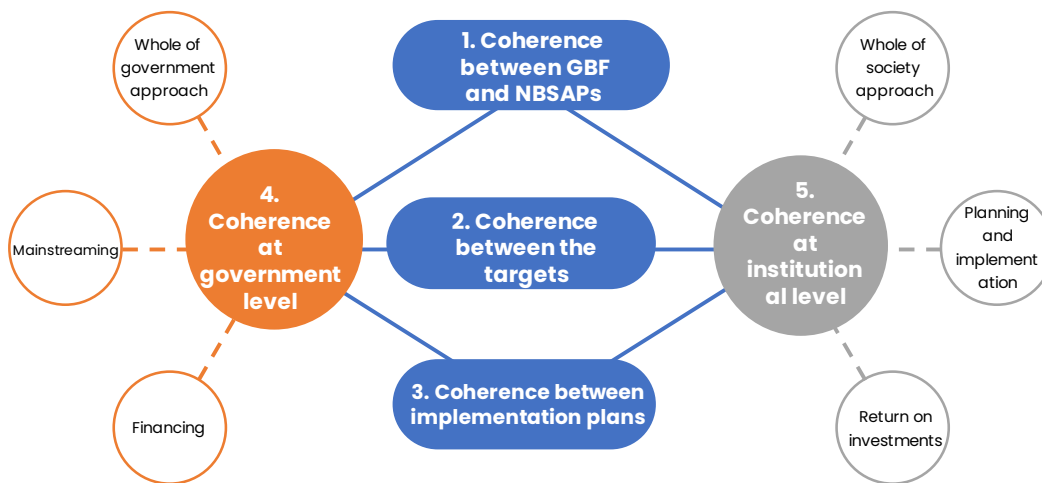
6. **Promoting Policy Innovation**: Policy coherence allows countries to learn from each other's experiences and innovations. By sharing success stories and best practices, countries can develop more effective policies and strategies to tackle environmental challenges.

5. Conclusions

In summary, policy coherence is a critical factor in the successful implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. It helps align national policies with international commitments, facilitates international cooperation, addresses complex challenges, optimizes resource allocation, strengthens compliance, and engages stakeholders effectively. Ultimately, policy coherence contributes to more sustainable and effective environmental protection efforts globally.

How Policy Coherence helps? Case of CBD/GBF

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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