

FAO's Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform
Regional Consultative Meeting on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across the Agricultural
Sectors – Asia and the Pacific
Bangkok, Thailand, 17-19 July 2019

1. Introduction

At the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP13) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico, the Parties called for the mainstreaming of biodiversity across all agricultural sectors and adopted the Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-Being¹. Concurrently, in late 2016, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) offered to act as the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform² (the Platform). This Platform facilitates the dialogue and exchange of information between governments and other stakeholders regarding the sustainable use, management and restoration of biodiversity across the agricultural sectors.

The FAO Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform adopts a systemic and holistic approach to biodiversity mainstreaming, fostering and highlighting the synergies between FAO's work on biodiversity and connected areas, including agroecology, Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), indigenous peoples, incentives for ecosystem services, agrobiodiversity and seeds, low carbon agriculture, nutrition, sustainable rice production, and pollination, among other relevant subjects.

As the first major activity of the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform, FAO organized the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors (the Dialogue)³ in Rome, 29-31 May 2018. The event was co-organized with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and brought together around 250 experts and stakeholders, strengthening partnerships and consolidating the role of FAO as a neutral forum for policy dialogue.

¹ Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/cop/cop-13/hls/cancun%20declaration-en.pdf>. Cited: 07/12/18.

² The FAO's Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform Brochure is available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/CA2403EN/ca2403en.pdf>. Cited: 07/12/18.

³ Check the full report at: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca1352en/ca1352en.pdf>. Cited: 27/03/19.

The Dialogue's program encompassed five sessions and a high-level segment, including four cross-thematic parallel sessions in which attendees discussed biodiversity mainstreaming through the lens of global governance, national policies and legislation, incentives and investments, and value chains. The joint report of the co-chairs of the cross-thematic sessions gave suggestions for the FAO Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform, including (a) exploring an integrated and systemic approach with the Rio Conventions, (b) developing a Biodiversity Strategy to guide and better coordinate FAO's work on biodiversity mainstreaming, (c) collecting data and developing metrics and indicators, (d) reinforcing synergies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), (e) promoting learning and facilitating the sharing of information. Furthermore, the sessions addressed the strengthening of synergies between the agricultural sectors and biodiversity, biodiversity mainstreaming in practice, and the future activities of the FAO Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform.

It is important to point out that the Dialogue confirmed the timeliness and priority of mainstreaming biodiversity across the agricultural sectors. It also took stock of the state of current biodiversity mainstreaming efforts and experiences at different levels and identified areas of joint action in developing integrated approaches, for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in support of the SDGs, while increasing production to meet the growing demand for food.

In this context, the FAO's Committee on Forestry (COFO), in its 24th session (16-20 July 2018), considered the report from the Dialogue and "supported FAO's initiative to serve as a Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform covering forestry, fisheries, and agriculture, in an integrated manner, and recognized that the implementation of sustainable forest management is important for mainstreaming biodiversity in forestry"⁴.

Furthermore, the 26th session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), held in Rome 1-5 October 2018, welcomed the convening of the Dialogue, inviting countries to mainstream biodiversity across their agricultural sectors. According the session's report⁵, the Committee requested FAO to develop a strategy on biodiversity mainstreaming, to organize electronic

⁴ Full report (COFO24) available at: www.fao.org/3/MX698EN/mx698en.pdf. Cited 18/12/18.

⁵ Full report (COAG26) available at: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/bodies/Conference_2019/MY349_21/MY349_C_2019_21_en.pdf. Cited 18/12/18.

consultations on the draft strategy, to continue to act as the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform, and to:

- a) facilitate, in collaboration with its partners, such as the CBD and other UN organizations, the integration in a structured and coherent manner of actions for the conservation, sustainable use and management of biological diversity across agricultural sectors at national, regional and international levels;
- b) facilitate dialogue among governments, communities of practice and other stakeholders;
- c) facilitate the exchange of information and data on biodiversity and biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices and policies among stakeholders; and
- d) develop an action plan indicating the resources needed.

Given this background, the Regional Consultative Meeting on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors (Regional Consultative Meeting) to be organized in Asia and the Pacific in 2019 is part of FAO's mandate on biodiversity mainstreaming. It will be the next in a series of events on the topic, following the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and the High Level Regional Dialogue on the Integration of Biodiversity in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries⁶ (Mexico City, October 2018).

2. The Regional Consultative Meeting in Asia and the Pacific

According to the latest regional assessment report for Asia and the Pacific on biodiversity and ecosystem services, from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)⁷, “[t]he Asia-Pacific region is bio-geographically one of the most diverse and rich regions in the world”, with “a very contrasting geography spanning from the highest Himalayan Mountains to the deepest Pacific Ocean floors [...], which translates into unique and highly diverse terrestrial and marine ecosystems.”

Among the group of 17 countries identified as the most biodiversity-rich in the world, seven of them are located in the Region, namely Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Papua New Guinea.⁸ Asia and the Pacific also have “numerous endemic species and more global biodiversity hotspots [...] than any other region of the world”, adding

⁶ More information available at: <http://www.fao.org/americas/eventos/ver/en/c/1156040/>. Cited: 07/12/18.

⁷ IPES. *Chapters of the regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Asia and the Pacific of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*. 2018. Available at: https://www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/ipbes_6_inf_5_rev.1_1.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=16518. Cited 07/01/19.

⁸ UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre. *Megadiverse Countries*. 2014. Available at: <http://www.biodiversitya-z.org/content/megadiverse-countries>. Cited 07/01/19.

up to seventeen biodiversity hotspots.⁹ As these hotspots are directly linked to food and agricultural production, FAO has a relevant mandate in the region.

For instance, FAO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP)¹⁰ has been working towards community-based gene banks (in the Philippines), projects that address the protection of the habitat of migratory birds, and the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) – through its Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Programme (FLEGT).

The Regional Priorities for FAO are (1) resilience and sustainable production in the context of climate change, (2) improving food safety and nutrition, (3) reducing transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases, (4) blue growth (aquaculture and marine systems), (5) minimizing food waste and loss, (6) inclusive value chain development, and (7) better data and analysis for decision making.¹¹

Given that, the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, during its thirty-fourth Session held in Fiji 9-13 April, outlined the following recommendations to FAO:

- i. Accelerate the implementation of the five Regional Initiatives on Zero Hunger; Blue Growth; the Interregional Initiative on Small Island Developing States for the Pacific; Climate Change; and One Health to place food security and nutrition, the reduction of rural poverty, and sustainable agriculture and food systems at the centre of FAO's agenda in the region for the 2018-2019 biennium;
- ii. Continue to emphasize the priority areas recommended by the previous Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, including nutrition and food safety; inclusive value chain development; food waste and loss; transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases; sustainable production and resilience in the context of climate change; and data and analysis for decision-making, monitoring and evaluation;
- iii. Support countries in other identified priority areas: agricultural productivity and diversification; GIAHS; ecosystem services and biodiversity; risk reduction and resilience building; innovation and technologies; sustainable soil and water management; empowerment of rural women and girls; capacity development for statistics collection, SDG

⁹ IPES. *Summary for policymakers of the IPBES regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Asia and the Pacific*. 2018. p. 13. Available at: https://www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/spm_asia-pacific_2018_digital.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=28394. Cited 07/01/19.

¹⁰ The full list of FAO member countries in Asia and the Pacific can be found here. <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/countries/en/>. Cited 07/01/18.

¹¹ FAO. *Delivering for results in Asia-Pacific: The 2017 RAP up*. 2017.

- monitoring and reporting; and the Port State Measures Agreement and the combating of IUU for sustainable fisheries;
- iv. Ensure its technical expertise is in line with the needs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, also in order to achieve the FAO Strategic Objectives, including rejuvenating and re-profiling its workforce in terms of skills, gender parity and geographical representation. This should not impact the immediate capacity of decentralized offices to meet the needs of countries and should be consistent with relevant United Nations guidance as well as its specific requirements as a United Nations specialized agency;
 - v. Accelerate the integration of the GAP into key Pacific regional fora and introduce new/enhanced collaboration with partners for improving food security and nutrition in the Pacific;
 - vi. Implement analytical work to address the challenges of the triple burden of malnutrition in the Asia-Pacific region;
 - vii. Work with Members in collaboration and partnership with subregional, regional and international institutions to provide policy advice and capacity development as well as to build on FAO's normative and standard-setting work.¹²

Concerning mainstreaming, which is the main focus area of the Regional Dialogue, IPBES highlights that the “[m]ainstreaming of biodiversity – that is, integrating biodiversity conservation into broader areas, including poverty alleviation, climate adaptation and degraded land rehabilitation programmes – has great potential to drive the region towards sustainability”¹³.

It necessitates embedding biodiversity in the decision making processes of government agencies that are not directly responsible for biodiversity policy (e.g., finance, agriculture, rural development, or energy and water resources ministries). Governments that involve multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process have achieved better coordination in the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.¹⁴

In consonance with FAO's RAP, there are some regional weaknesses in terms of biodiversity mainstreaming concerning member countries' awareness and capacities to mainstream biodiversity in their agricultural systems. Funding, guidelines, case studies and consultation workshops can facilitate the engagement of stakeholders in the development of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and other country/regional level biodiversity planning and policy processes.

¹² FAO. *Report*. Thirty-fourth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific. April 2018. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/mw412en/mw412en.pdf>. Cited 23/01/19.

¹³ IPES, 2018, p. 13.

¹⁴ IPES, 2018, p.13.

Given this and the role of FAO as a neutral forum for policy dialogue, in line with the strategic priority areas, and considering outcomes of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors (Rome, May 2018) and of the High Level Regional Dialogue on the Integration of Biodiversity in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Mexico City, October 2018), the Regional Consultative Meeting in Asia and the Pacific has a goal. The main goal is to facilitate the sharing of information on biodiversity mainstreaming (e.g. such as case studies, policies and legislation), fostering mutual learning among different stakeholders, identifying gaps, needs & priorities, creating synergies in the Region towards biodiversity mainstreaming, and reaching consensus on the way forward.

The Regional Consultative Meeting in Asia and the Pacific will provide an opportunity for dialogue between a wide range of stakeholders (see Section 5 – actors) to convene and address the issue of mainstreaming biodiversity in the following cross-thematic sessions:

- Cross-thematic session on mainstreaming biodiversity in agriculture and livestock;
- Cross-thematic session on mainstreaming biodiversity in forestry;
- Cross-thematic session on mainstreaming biodiversity in aquaculture and fisheries; and
- Cross-thematic session on mainstreaming biodiversity beyond agricultural sectors.

In this last session, participants will be discussing the links of biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors and its role and policy impact on climate adaptation and mitigation, migration and urbanization, gender equality and poverty alleviation, rural youth employment and green jobs, as well as on food security, nutrition and healthy diets.

The Regional Consultative Meeting's program will give a special focus to discussing gaps and needs in the Region, and policies and incentives for mainstreaming biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices in sustainable food systems. This may include sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, low carbon agriculture, forest landscape restoration, sustainable rice production, conservation agriculture, agroforestry, polycultures, seedbanks, and protecting pollinators.

Likewise, the event will share examples of strategies to value indigenous and traditional people's practices – including GIAHS – and regarding crop production and migratory bird flyway projects, which have been formulated to address either the protection of the habitat or the balancing between habitat and farmers' livelihoods.

2.1 Time frame, location and venue

The Regional Consultative Meeting in Asia and the Pacific will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, 17-19 July 2019. The tentative venue for the event is the Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel (2 Charoen Krung Road Soi 30 Siphya, Bang Rak, Bangkok 10500, Thailand).

3. Expected outcomes

Given FAO's mandate and work on biodiversity mainstreaming, reaffirmed by its governing bodies (see Section 1), the Regional Consultative Meeting is expected to:

- Foster dialogue between multiple stakeholders, including Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Land Use Planning, Finance and Energy, international agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), research institutions, and the private sector;
- Share an overview of the regional initiatives that can support the interplay between the agricultural, environmental, and cultural sectors, and greater biodiversity mainstreaming across the agricultural sectors, defining priorities to further assist them;
- Present inputs and recommendations to assist the formulation of a cross-sectoral (agricultural, environmental, etc.) plan on biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors for the RAP Region, and to disseminate the ongoing discussion on FAO's Biodiversity Strategy;
- Support the mobilization of resources and promote further engagement with the private sector/family farmers for biodiversity mainstreaming activities in the RAP Region (e.g. Coordination with GEF 7 priorities).

4. Organization Focal Points

The focal points for the organization of the Regional Consultative Meeting will be the following:

- FAO headquarters: the Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water Department (CBD) will organize the Regional Consultative Meeting, with cross-departmental collaboration.

Focal points will be Mr. Paulo Lourenço Dias Nunes, global coordinator of the FAO Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform (Paulo.LourencoDiasNunes@fao), and Ms. Bernardete Neves, Natural Resources Officer (Bernardete.Neves@fao.org).

- FAO RAP: Ms. Li He, Natural Resources Officer (He.Li@fao.org).

5. Actors

As the event aims to create dialogue across agricultural sectors, the following actors – among others – are identified as relevant for the meeting: (1) government agencies (policy makers and technical officers from Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Land Use Planning, Finance and Energy of selected Asia-Pacific countries); (2) academics and research institutions; (3) civil society (e.g. NGOs, producer and consumer organizations); (4) key private sector partners for sustainable food systems and value chains, investors, donors, and financing institutions.

Ideally, the Regional Consultative Meeting will have a diverse group of stakeholders from each selected Asia-Pacific country. More specifically, 70 to 80 participants (exact number to be defined) are expected to attend the Regional Consultative Meeting, which must have a good representation from Asia-Pacific countries. Criteria for selecting specific Asia-Pacific countries will take into consideration readiness and interest in biodiversity mainstreaming, ongoing FAO projects and emerging GEF proposals that could incorporate the recommendations.

6. Tentative Agenda

Tentatively, the Regional Consultative Meeting's program will encompass two and half days of activities, and an optional panel discussion:

- Opening Session:
 - Overview of dialogue events on biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors organized to date.
 - Presentation of FAO's Biodiversity Strategy.
 - Overview of related ongoing work in the Asia-Pacific Region.
 - Overview of identified priorities and their connection to the Asia-Pacific Region.

- Overview of the current state of biodiversity mainstreaming presented by Ministers of Agriculture and Environment from some countries in the Region.
- Discussion about FAO's engagement with CBD in shaping the global agenda on biodiversity for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
- Plenary Sessions I, II and V:
 - Regional exchange of experiences on biodiversity mainstreaming, highlighting good practices, synergies, and gaps.
 - Case studies will be identified from FAO and partners' ongoing work to depict how to encourage public and private funding to be channeled into practices and social mechanisms, such as co-management, that improves the sustainability of production while reducing environmental impacts¹⁵. The case studies also show how to include biodiversity and ecosystem values in policies, planning and decision-making processes.
 - Sessions I & II will have eight keynotes in total (each speaker will have 15 minutes for the presentation, followed by 5 minutes for discussion).
- Cross-thematic Sessions III, IV, VI and VII:
 - Discussion in four cross-thematic sessions to draft a cross-sectoral (agriculture, environment, etc.) [plan](#) on biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors for the Asia-Pacific Region towards CBD COP 15 and the post-2020 Agenda.
 - The cross-thematic sessions will be as follows: biodiversity mainstreaming in agriculture and livestock (cross-thematic session III), biodiversity mainstreaming in forestry (cross-thematic session IV); biodiversity mainstreaming in aquaculture and fisheries (cross-thematic Session VI); and biodiversity mainstreaming in cross-cutting issues such as: gender, migration, nutrition, urbanization, youth employment, traditional knowledge (cross-thematic session VII).

¹⁵ This responds to CBD Decision XIII/3 Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors, paragraph 32: "Further encourages Parties and invites other Governments, as appropriate, to use an appropriate mix of regulatory and incentive measures aligned with national biodiversity objectives, including the elimination, phasing out and reform of incentives harmful to biodiversity in order, inter alia, to reduce habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation and to increase the efficiency of use of water, fertilizer and pesticides and to avoid their inappropriate use, and to encourage public and private sources of finance to be channeled into practices that improve the sustainability of production while reducing biodiversity loss, and to promote and support the restoration of ecosystems that provide essential services in a way that provides for the needs of indigenous peoples and local communities, does not cause harm to other ecosystems, and consistent with national legislation and international obligations; [...]"

- Methodology: Participants will be divided into four cross-thematic sessions. Each cross-thematic session will have two co-chairs, plus a moderator, a note taker and a colleague responsible for reporting. Working Groups will convene at four allocated time slots. The cross-thematic sessions will be kick-started by a presentation relevant to each thematic area. Participants (except moderators, co-chairs, note takers and designated reporting people) will rotate to the next cross-thematic session by the end of each time slot. Following this, each participant will have contributed to all cross-thematic sessions.
- Plenary Session VIII:
 - Report on the Outcome of the Meeting.
 - Exchange of discussions by cross-thematic sessions' rapporteurs and wrap up of the identified priorities for developing the action plans. Please kindly refer to the expected outcomes pointed out in Section 3.

	17 July	18 July	19 July
Morning	08:30 – 09:00 Registration		09:00 – 10:30 GIAHS as a means to mainstream biodiversity
	09:00 – 10:30 Opening Session Group Picture	09:00 – 10:30 Plenary Session IV	10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break
	10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break	10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break	11:00 – 12:30 Plenary Session VIII Reporting from Cross- thematic Sessions' Co- Chairs
	11:00 – 12:30 Plenary Session I Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework	11:00 -12:30 Cross-thematic Session V Keynote Presentation 10' Dialogue 80'	
Lunch	12:30 - 13:30	12:30 - 13:30	12:30 - 13:30
Afternoon	13:30 – 15:00 Plenary Session II	13:30 - 15:00 Cross-thematic Session VI Keynote Presentation 10' Dialogue 80'	
	15:00 – 15:30 Coffee Break	15:00 – 15:30 Coffee Break	
	15:30 – 15:50 Introduction to the Cross- Thematic Sessions	15:30 - 17:00 Mainstreaming biodiversity – evidence from Asia and the Pacific	
	15:50 – 17:30 Cross-thematic Session III Keynote Presentation 10' Dialogue 90'	17:00 - 18:30 Cross-thematic Session VII Keynote Presentation 10' Dialogue 80'	
	18:30 - 20:00 Reception	19:00 - 20:30 Dinner	

7. Relevant links

- FAO Agroecology Knowledge Hub: <http://www.fao.org/agroecology/home/en/>
- FAO Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform: <http://www.fao.org/biodiversity/mainstreaming-platform/en/>
- FAO's Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water Department: <http://www.fao.org/about/who-we-are/departments/climate-biodiversity-land-water/en/>
- FAO's Global Action on Pollination Services for Sustainable Agriculture: <http://www.fao.org/pollination/en/>
- Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems: <http://www.fao.org/giahs/en/>
- High Level Regional Dialogue on the Integration of Biodiversity in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DRANIBA): <http://www.fao.org/americas/eventos/ver/es/c/1156454/>
- Incentives for Ecosystem Services: <http://www.fao.org/in-action/incentives-for-ecosystem-services/en/>
- Indigenous Peoples: <http://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/en/>
- Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors: <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/multi-stakeholder-dialogue-on-biodiversity/en/>
- Sustainable Rice Platform: <http://www.sustainablerice.org/About-Us/>

8. Contact Information

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