

Proposed title:

Shifting UNFCCC role from negotiation to implementation: why more synergies between Rio conventions are critical?

Towards more efficient negotiations, effective implementation at project and landscape levels, and sustainable financing for climate action.

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N.B. the Rio conventions mentioned in this article refer to the UN environmental conventions born at the UN Earth Summit in 1992, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)¹, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)² and the United Nations Conventions on Combating Desertification (UNCCD)³.

Abstract:

Given the recent negotiations results under the UNFCCC including the adoption of the Paris Agreement, a shift of the UNFCCC role from negotiations to implementation is expected. The proposed article will analyse how this shift could make sense from the climate-smart land-use sector perspective, building on necessary synergies with the two other Rio conventions (CBD and UNCCD) at different levels.

1. Making more efficient use of the negotiation efforts, towards joint COPs between CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC

The three Rio conventions are very aligned in their structure and operational processes, thus it seems very realistic to achieve more synergies and efficiency through joint negotiation processes. Their thematic being closely interrelated, it could make sense to organize joint COPs, as well as joint technical and scientific bodies' meetings⁴. For example this would enable common discussions on ecosystem restoration, EbA, LDN, FLR, REDD+ and CSA⁵, among key interrelated topics of the land use sectors. Similarly more joint initiatives between the IPCC, IPBES and SPI⁶ could be called for to serve joint science-based negotiation efforts.

2. Catalysing implementation support by the UNFCCC: seizing synergies between Rio conventions at landscape and project levels

UNFCCC could support systematic country efforts in aligning their NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs, NAP-CCD and LDN targets, among key policies and strategies. Rio conventions' secretariats are already working on building more synergies, including through their Joint Liaison Group (JLG)⁷, and common workshops have been organized. The JLG highlights ambitious

¹ <https://www.cbd.int/>

² <https://unfccc.int/>

³ <https://www.unccd.int/>

⁴ Currently SBSTTAs under the CBD, CRIC under the UNCCD and SBSTAs under the UNFCCC are separated processes.

⁵ Ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), land degradation neutrality (LDN), forest and landscape restoration (FLR), Reductions of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and climate smart agriculture (CSA)

⁶ Science-policy interfaces under the 3 Rio conventions. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES); Science-Policy Interface (SPI)

⁷ JLG web page : <https://www.cbd.int/cooperation/liaison.shtml>

objectives, but how do they translate in reality? The Egyptian Initiative⁸ at the COP CBD 14 for convergence between Rio conventions seem to go in the right direction, but quid of its implementation? Similarly the idea of a Rio Conventions Project Preparation Facility (PPF)⁹ to support the design of transformative projects at the synergy between Rio conventions is an innovative and pragmatic idea, which may be a driver for the 3 Rio conventions' national focal points (NFPs) to work together at country level. Hopefully this will be captured in the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and a common agenda between UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD. But there again, quid of the PPF implementation?

3. National Climate Funds as key platforms to support implementation of synergies between Rio conventions. What role for UNFCCC?

At country level, climate finance is a burning issue and many countries could gain autonomy with the development of a sound climate finance architecture including domestic funds. To this end, UNFCCC could have a role to play in supporting NFPs to foster the design of National Financing Vehicles (National Climate Funds) to finance NDCs implementation (aligned with other key strategies¹⁰) and to mainstream climate change considerations into sectoral funds. Examples of such funds for the land use sector include National Forest/REDD+ Funds and Biodiversity Funds which can play a catalytic role for climate action. The design and/or reform of climate funds could gain from targeted support, for example to ensure the connection between domestic funds and global vertical funds such as the Green Climate Fund.

⁸ <https://www.dailynewssegypt.com/2018/11/21/egypts-initiative-aims-to-organise-application-of-rio-conventions-not-actual-combination-cop14/>

⁹ Announcement at COP UNFCCC 23: <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/executive-secretaries-call-for-facility-linking-rio-conventions/>

¹⁰ National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), National Action Plans to Combat Desertification (NAP-CCD)/ Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets