



United Nations  
Convention to Combat  
Desertification



## SB58 Side event- Concept Note

# Rio synergies: How agroecology and restoration contribute to climate, biodiversity and land targets

Tuesday, 06 June 2023 @ 14:45—16:00

Meeting Room Bonn (185 pax)

Organizers: UNCCD, Biovision (Food Policy Forum for Change), ELD Initiative, WWF, Agroecology Coalition

## Abstract

Food system transformation and land restoration are key to harmonizing action between the Rio conventions to achieve climate, biodiversity and land targets. This session will inspire and discuss how agroecology, restoration and integrated planning can connect and deliver on these agendas.

## Objectives of the side event

- Demonstrate how agroecology, restoration and integrated planning can connect and deliver on the agendas of the three Rio conventions: UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD.
- Inspire actors from various communities to align their actions, strategies and policies, to embrace integrated approaches and leverage synergies.

## Background and general framing

Climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation are closely interrelated. If global warming is not limited to 1.5C, climate change will likely become the dominant cause of biodiversity loss in the coming decades. Land degradation typically results in biodiversity being lost and is a major contributor to climate change, among others through the release of soil carbon and nitrous oxide. Land degradation and the loss of intact ecosystems also change and disrupt rainfall patterns and exacerbate extreme weather like droughts or floods thus amplifying the impacts of climate change. None of these three global challenges can be effectively addressed in a siloed manner. Climate, biodiversity and land targets – the targets of the three Rio conventions, UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD, as well as the 2030 Agenda – hence can only be achieved together.

## Synergies between land-based targets across the three Rio conventions

Land is one of the common denominators between the three Rio Conventions, thus, they are systemically connected through their land-related targets. For example, Target 1 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) under the CBD on “biodiversity inclusive spatial planning” is connected to

a UNCCD COP decision that encourages parties to “foster and support integrated land use planning” as an “enabler of synergies, complementarities, and policy coherence among the Rio conventions and as a tool to achieve LDN targets”. GBF Target 2 on ecosystem restoration is connected to a UNCCD COP decision that encourages parties to “implement land and ecosystem restoration”. Nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches are key to all three conventions. For instance, GBF Target 10 recognizes agroecology as contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of production systems and to food security, conserving and restoring biodiversity and maintaining nature’s contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services. Moreover, IPCC Assessment 6 reports with high confidence that the “adoption of agroecology principles and practices will be highly beneficial to maintaining healthy, productive food systems under climate change”. The connections between land-based targets, prove there is also a strong case for synergies between the national action frameworks under the three conventions: NDCs, NBSAPs and national LDN-targets.

### **Addressing the sustainability of food systems has significant implications for the three Rio conventions.**

The UN system and the conventions are increasingly recognizing the role of food systems in solving the global crises we currently face. The CBD underscores the sustainable management of agriculture and the preservation of agrobiodiversity within food systems, as contributing to food security, resilience, long-term efficiency and productivity. The UNFCCC acknowledges the significance of climate-smart practices within food systems, considering their dual role as contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and vulnerable entities to climate change impacts. The UNCCD recognizes the vital role of sustainable land management, particularly within food systems, as a potent tool for combating land degradation and restoring degraded lands. A food system lens is thus necessary for countries in the design, revision and implementation of their national action frameworks, that can uphold, multiple-benefits such as biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, land restoration and food security, contributing to a more resilient and equitable future.

### **Integrated and holistic approaches as the way forward**

Materializing the synergies between conventions is only viable via integrated approaches such as agroecology, land restoration and integrated planning. These bear the potential to simultaneously contribute to achieving climate, biodiversity and land targets, transform food systems, improve livelihoods of people and bring development opportunities to local communities and national economies. As such, these all contribute to multifunctional landscapes that provide important co-benefits. Despite the broad agreement about the manifold land and food related synergies between the conventions’ target systems, implementation currently takes place in a siloed manner and the potential of integrated approaches is not fully exploited.

### **Key guiding questions for the event**

This session will demonstrate how agroecology, land restoration, and integrated planning, as an integrated approach, can connect and deliver on climate, biodiversity, and land targets, and bring about the transformation of food systems. It shows how a synergistic implementation leads to better outcomes, more coherence, increased investments, and reduced costs. This session aims to inspire such action with evidence, country experiences, and concrete entry points. It will introduce new evidence from Rwanda on the economics of harmonizing land restoration activities across the Rio conventions. It will share experiences from members of the agroecology coalition on how agroecological practices

contribute to achieving multiple targets. And it will hear from leading experts, decision makers and practitioners on opportunities, challenges and ways forward to better harness synergies and embrace integrated approaches. The following are questions guiding the concept of this event:

- What is the current state of evidence on the role of agroecology, restoration and integrated planning to deliver multiple objectives? Where are the gaps? Which targets exactly are connected?
- What concrete actions are being undertaken by governments to deliver on the three target systems in a synergistic manner?
- What are the main barriers to better coherence between the three conventions and their means of implementation?
- How to better connect NDCs, NBSAPs, LDN-targets and other national policies (e.g., with agroecology, land restoration, and integrated planning)?
- How can the Rio convention secretariats and other actors support synergies?

## Agenda

Duration	What	Who
2 min	<b>Introduction</b>	Moderator: Martina Fleckenstein, WWF
5 min	<b>Opening remarks</b>	Sebastian Lesch, BMZ – <i>virtual</i>
23min	<b>Technical inputs</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Insights from Rwanda’s synergies assessment - new study: “Economics of Harmonizing Land Restoration Activities across the Rio Conventions in Rwanda and Implications for Food Security”</li> <li>2. Evidence on benefits of agroecology for the Rio targets</li> </ol>	Alisher Mirzabaev, University of Bonn  John Garcia Ulloa, Biovision
30min	<b>Panel discussion</b> Ways to bring forward actions to deliver on the three targets	Moderator: Sophia Baumert, GIZ 4 panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government of Mexico (tbc)</li> <li>- European Union representative (tbc)</li> <li>- Miriam Medel Garcia, UNCCD</li> <li>- Esther Penunia, Asian Farmers Association and Steering Committee Member of the AE coalition</li> </ul>
10min	<b>Q&amp;A</b> Interaction with audience	Moderator: Sophia Baumert, GIZ
5min	<b>Closing remarks</b>	Dirk Nemitz, UNFCCC

## Annex 1: Related material

- CBD COP15 side event on Rio synergies: [full story](#) & [recording of the event](#)
- UNCCD COP15 side event on Rio synergies with launch of Rwanda synergies study: [full story](#) & [recording of the event](#)
- Stockholm +50 high-level side event on Rio synergies: [recording of the event](#)
- Report on Agroecology and climate change: <https://www.fao.org/3/cb0486en/cb0486en.pdf>
- Brief on Agroecology and GBF: [https://www.agroecology-pool.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/COP15\\_Policy-Brief\\_Agroecology.pdf](https://www.agroecology-pool.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/COP15_Policy-Brief_Agroecology.pdf)
- Brief on the synergies between agroecology and conservation: <https://www.agroecology-pool.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Outcome-brief-2-1.pdf>
- Brief on closing the Gap: Scaling national-level actions on food systems transformation [https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/closing\\_the\\_gaps\\_to\\_transform\\_food\\_systems.pdf](https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/closing_the_gaps_to_transform_food_systems.pdf): Global Alliance for the Future of Food, The Politics of
- [Knowledge: Understanding the Evidence for Agroecology, Regenerative Approaches, and Indigenous Foodways](#). n.p.: Global Alliance for the Future of Food, 2021.