

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Catalyzing action for biodiversity, climate and health

Principles for an effective Agenda for Nature and People

The theme of the International Day for Biological Diversity 2020 is “Our solutions are in nature”. Its message comes at a pivotal time during the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, which shows us the interconnectedness between human and planetary health. A sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis should address multiple societal challenges, in particular biological diversity, human health, environmental health, climate change mitigation, and adaptation to climate change impacts.

Nature-based solutions by non-governmental and local actors, such as businesses, investors, cities, regions, and civil society organizations, could contribute to the effective and integrated governance of multiple challenges. An *action agenda for nature and people* could engage such actors to contribute to biodiversity, climate and sustainable development goals; promote scalable and replicable solutions; and, identify areas where more engagement and collaboration is needed. Lessons learned from other action agendas, for instance for ‘global climate action’ and the Sustainable Development Goals, could help ensure an effective action agenda that catalyzes more action, greater transparency, and higher governmental ambition. We propose the following design principles for an agenda for nature and people:

First, the agenda should be collaborative, engaging key players such as the CBD Secretariat, other UN specialized agencies, and CBD COP presidents, as well as civil society organizations, to perform functionally linked activities, such as the organization of high-level technical examination of nature-based solutions; the brokering of new partnerships; and the assessment of progress among non-governmental and local commitments. A collaborative agenda combines the strengths of multiple actors, while minimizing its institutional footprint.

Second, the agenda should promote transparency among actors that commit to take action. Data collection should go beyond the collection of pledges, and track achievements, environmental and social impacts, and tangible outputs. A transparent action agenda can identify particularly successful practices, as well as areas where more action is necessary.

Finally, an action agenda for nature and people must be catalytic, engaging more, and more effective, action. It should particularly seek to strengthen non-governmental and local engagement in biologically rich regions, and to enable local actors, that have been underrepresented in biodiversity governance, to take action.

The Synergies of Planetary Health Research Initiative at the Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research - York University, together with the German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), and the Institute of International Relations - University of São Paulo, have developed tracking methodologies for measuring the performance of nature-based actions in a comparative manner, to help an agenda for nature and people to catalyze action, and to demonstrate progress.

Synergies of Planetary Health Research Initiative <https://dighr.yorku.ca/projects/synergies/>
Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research (DIGHR) – York University – Canada

