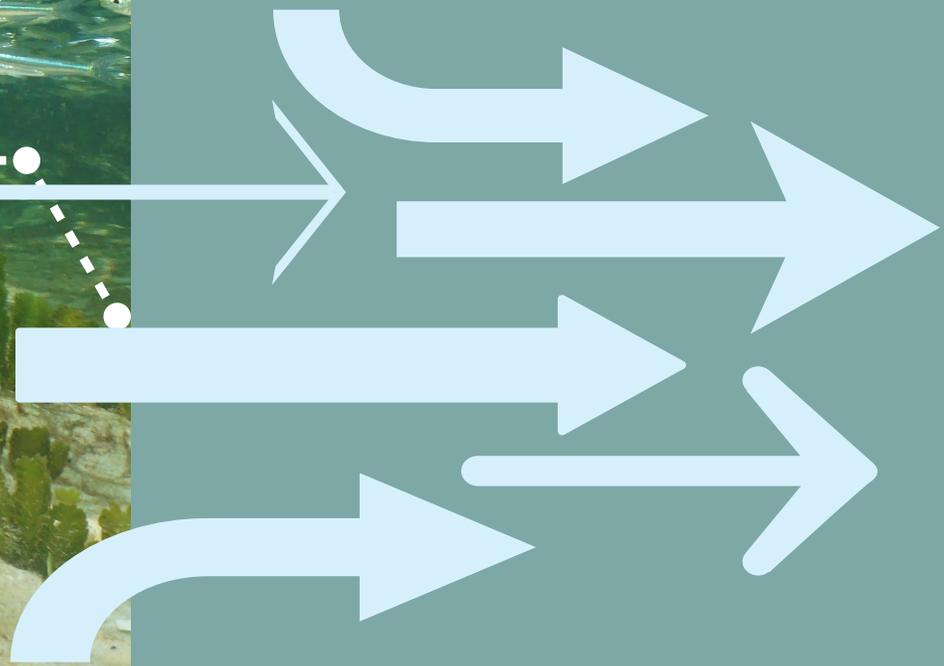




Experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean with mainstreaming biodiversity in the productive, economic and financial sectors

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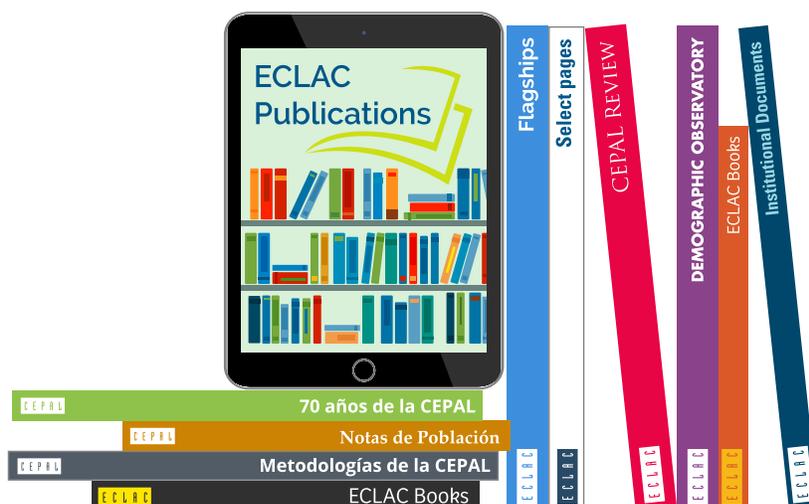
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This document was prepared by Víctor Alvarado, consultant with the Agricultural Development and Biodiversity Unit of the Natural Resources Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Marcia Tambutti, Senior Research Assistant and biodiversity expert in the same Unit, and Aleksandar Rankovic, professor at Sciences Po and researcher at the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) during the preparation and drafting of the document, in the framework of the activities of the Division's programme of work. The document is published with the financial support of French cooperation.

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Presentation

There is a growing sense of urgency worldwide generated by the current environmental and climate crises, as well as the challenges presented by pollution, multilateral governance, and the pandemic and its devastating socioeconomic consequences. Mitigating the impact of these challenges will require coherent, integrated solutions that simultaneously address the underlying drivers of the crises and their impacts. The Convention on Biological Diversity proposes a transformative change to achieve new targets on biodiversity, which are still under negotiation, in an effort to make progress along a path consistent with the desired 2050 Vision of living in harmony with nature.

In order to modify consumption and production patterns, the existing gaps associated with technology, education, access, skills, opportunities and resources must be narrowed. It will also be imperative to modify public and private investment to prevent worsening climate change, the destruction of national and global common resources, and biodiversity loss and degradation.

The mainstreaming of biodiversity in policies and sectors beyond the environmental sector is a tool to effect structural changes that will make it possible to halt and reverse nature loss and degradation, as set forth in the theory of change described in the draft post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (post-2020 GBF). Implementation of national biodiversity policies and the Convention has proven to be the most significant challenge and is a core aspect of the new post-2020 GBF. It is clear that progressive, structural change is needed, a “big push for sustainability,” as stated by ECLAC (a “transformative change” as IPBES has called it), to reconfigure the way ecosystems and their services are preserved and used, while placing justice and well-being at the centre. However, shifting to new development models is no easy task.

There is a need for more knowledge about current experiences in the region —learning how to strengthen, expand and replicate them— as well as have greater clarity on the challenges encountered in their implementation. This case study on mainstreaming biodiversity in the agriculture, fisheries, forestry, finance, manufacturing, infrastructure and tourism sectors in collaboration with national and subnational governments, cities, and local communities in Latin American and Caribbean countries, serves as a contribution towards the process of the new post-2020 GBF and to the design of practical solutions that can help us build back better after the pandemic. Simply put, it aims to illustrate with concrete practices progress towards development that better balances the social, environmental and economic dimensions. The analysis is complemented by a study on governance for transformative change for biodiversity that

includes nine of the ten cases in this study (Catacora-Vargas and others, 2022) and by the compendium of data collected for the cases (Catacora-Vargas and others, forthcoming) as they represent excellent examples of South-South learning, which we hope to replicate and adapt to the specific conditions in other countries and regions.

It is worth mentioning that the report *Latin America Economic Outlook 2021*, produced by OECD, ECLAC, CAF and the European Union (OECD and others, 2021), proposes to address the effects of the pandemic and transform development traps into virtuous circles that place the region on a path to greater well-being. The four traps identified in the 2019 report (OECD and others, 2019)—namely, low productivity, social vulnerability, institutional weakness and environmental unsustainability—are associated to varying degrees with practical solutions derived from the successful experiences with biodiversity mainstreaming in the cases analysed, from a regional, biocultural perspective and in conditions that are often similar across the so-called global South.

The catalytic potential of reciprocal biodiversity mainstreaming in the productive, economic and financial sectors, as well as the consideration of objectives for these sectors within the environmental sector, as identified in the cases studied, can serve as a foundation for leveraging the willingness to change that is gaining traction globally, and can offer best practices for the conservation, sustainable use and equitable distribution of the benefits of biological diversity. The transition to sustainability must be rooted in transformations driven by institutions, investments, policy frameworks and communities, with a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, leaving no one behind, and emphasizing biodiversity considerations within an equitable and sustainable vision of development.

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