

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)
Cooperation with other international organizations
Synergies across the three Rio Conventions
Submission by Brazil | September 2025

1. Mandate

- 1.1.** In an informal consultation session with the parties held under agenda item 14 (“Cooperation with other International Organizations”) during the 62nd sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies, the SBSTA Chair noted that multiple parties had expressed their interest in discussing the topic of synergies across the three Rio Conventions. In view of this, the SBSTA Chair proposed that the discussion be resumed during the 63rd sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies, in Belém.
- 1.2.** On the occasion, several parties and party negotiation groups reinforced their support for the SBSTA Chair’s proposal to discuss the matter in Belém. Brazil considers that the 63rd SB sessions offer an opportunity to advance in a structured and consistent manner on the promotion of synergies across the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- 1.3.** Brazil is pleased to submit its views in response to the invitation made at SBSTA 62 for parties and observers to provide inputs on strengthening the cooperation of the UNFCCC with other international organizations, under agenda item 14 (“Cooperation with other International Organizations”).

2. Synergies across the three Rio Conventions: context in the UNFCCC

- 2.1.** The UNFCCC was conceived in the same context as the UNCCD and the CBD, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The three so-called “Rio Conventions” were established in response to concerns regarding environmental and development issues, with the principle of sustainable development at their core.
- 2.2.** Although each has its own scope, the Conventions are closely related, as efforts to implement one of the agreements often contribute to achieving the objectives of another (*e.g.*, forest restoration), while deterioration under one of the Conventions tends to negatively affect the other two (*e.g.*, ecosystem degradation). Given the various points of connection among the Rio Conventions, it is essential that due attention be paid to potential synergies in their implementation.
- 2.3.** In addition, as temperatures rise and weather patterns become more irregular, biodiversity loss advances, and droughts become more common and intense, poverty is exacerbated, inequalities widen, and livelihoods are lost. This is irrefutable evidence that climate change, biodiversity loss, and desertification are

not only environmental issues, but also social and economic ones, which must be addressed in a coherent manner.

- 2.4. Significant progress has been made on this topic last year at both CBD COP 16 and UNCCD COP 16. In Decision CBD/COP/DEC/16/22, from 2024, the parties to the CBD requested the secretariat to: (i) invite parties and other actors to submit positions on options for enhanced policy coherence, including a potential joint work programme, to be compiled by the CBD secretariat and shared with the Joint Liaison Group; (ii) submit the compilation of options raised to the subsidiary bodies of the CBD; and (iii) invite the UNFCCC and UNCCD secretariats to collaborate in an exchange of technical information to explore cooperation options to support the implementation of the three Conventions, which took place on 15 June, in Bonn.
- 2.5. In Decision UNCCD/COP/DEC/16/8, also from 2024, the parties to the UNCCD decided to: (i) encourage integration at the national level in the planning and implementation of the Conventions and potential collaboration between their national focal points; (ii) invite parties to prioritize holistic and integrated action that takes into account the links between climate, biodiversity, and desertification; (iii) request the secretariat to promote the sharing of data collected under each Convention, improve access to projects and programs that relate to the three Conventions, and consider building interoperability of information management systems; (iv) request that the secretariat continue to collaborate with the secretariats of the other two Conventions, including through the Joint Liaison Group; (v) request that the secretariat continue to support parties in enhancing coordination among the offices of the national focal points; and (vi) request that the secretariat continue to intensify efforts to strengthen relations between the scientific bodies of the Conventions.
- 2.6. Although the outcome of the first Global Stocktake in 2023 (Decision 1/CMA.5) emphasized the importance of aligning the climate and biodiversity agendas and strengthening cooperation across the Rio Conventions, the UNFCCC regime has not explored synergies across them to the same extent as the CBD and the UNCCD regimes. The opportunity to further discuss this topic during the 63rd SB sessions offers the UNFCCC regime the possibility of reaching a level of maturity on this issue similar to that already achieved by the CBD and the UNCCD regimes.
- 2.7. In this context, Brazil is interested in ensuring that the discussion on synergies across the three Rio Conventions takes into account efforts to ensure consistency and efficiency in their implementation, the provision of adequate means of implementation to achieve the objectives of these Conventions, and a people-centered approach.

3. Guidelines for cooperation to promote synergies in the implementation of the Rio Conventions

- 3.1. Discussions on policy coherence and synergies across the Rio Conventions must be framed from an implementation perspective. Actions related to synergies and policy coherence must aim primarily at enhancing and facilitating the implementation of relevant international commitments at the national and local levels.
- 3.2. In addition, these discussions must consider the principles and objectives of each Convention, as well as the principles enshrined in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. In particular, the Principle of Common, but Differentiated Responsibilities, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- 3.3. Any synergistic measures should not only preserve the policy space of countries in accordance with their national circumstances and priorities, but also closely observe the mandates and specificities of each Convention. This approach would be consistent with the party-driven nature of the UNFCCC and other multilateral environmental agreements, thus avoiding top-down approaches that do not resonate with challenges faced by parties on the ground.
- 3.4. Brazil expects that the work on synergies be facilitative and non-prescriptive, allowing each and every party to explore tools that contribute to achieving the objectives of the Conventions, in line with their national policies. This approach is important to avoid disproportionately shifting responsibilities to megadiverse countries.
- 3.5. Moreover, efforts towards synergistic action must be guided by a people-centered approach by which the needs of people in vulnerable situations are at the core of proposed policies, in particular Indigenous Peoples, local communities, people of African descent, women, girls, children and young people, and traditional peoples and communities. To ensure this, transparency must be maintained throughout the entire process.
- 3.6. The elements described in this section provide the essential features that should guide any discussion on synergies. This will ensure that the work to be undertaken under the UNFCCC considers the specific circumstances and challenges faced on the ground. Only in this way can the outcome of these discussions be welcomed by all parties.

4. Brazil's recommendations for enhanced policy coherence across the three Rio Conventions

- 4.1. As mentioned above, discussions on synergies across the Conventions during the 63rd SB sessions, under the agenda item on "Cooperation with other International Organizations, will offer the UNFCCC the possibility of achieving the same level of maturity regarding this topic as under the CBD and the UNCCD regimes. To

enable this dialogue, the SBSTA should prepare a synthesis report systematizing the views and considerations presented in the submissions of parties and non-parties, in order to facilitate a general understanding of the information presented.

- 4.2. Regarding substance, Brazil deems it beneficial to initiate a discussion on options for improving policy coherence across the Rio Conventions, including elements for a possible joint work programme. This potential joint work programme should be voluntary and facilitative in nature, and it should not seek to add to existing commitments that parties have made under each regime. It would operate under the guidance of the Rio Conventions COPs, so that any outputs (*e.g.*, reports, recommendations) would still require adoption by each COP to have effect.

National coordination, knowledge sharing and capacity building

- 4.3. A potential joint work programme should aim at advancing coherence in national planning for policies related to climate change, biodiversity, and desertification and land degradation. A first step in this direction would be to promote the collaboration between national focal points, as well as national coordination mechanisms to support aligning Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
- 4.4. One way to achieve this would be to facilitate technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer, and capacity building. This would increase knowledge of the interlinkages between climate change, biodiversity, and desertification and land degradation, thus enabling parties to create more coherent strategies to address these challenges.
- 4.5. Through technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer, and capacity building, parties would also strengthen their capacities to monitor and assess those interlinkages. In addition, parties would improve their ability to develop and implement projects that generate co-benefits across national objectives related to climate change, biodiversity, and desertification and land degradation. This work could build upon the foundations laid by the Joint Capacity-Building Programme, established in 2023.
- 4.6. Technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer, and capacity building are also crucial to enable the effective and meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders in decision-making, in particular people in vulnerable situations, especially Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and people of African descent. As is widely recognized, these populations play a central role as guardians of traditional practices that are essential for tackling global climate change and conserving and sustainably using biodiversity.
- 4.7. Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and people of African descent are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, and desertification and land degradation. But the traditional knowledge associated with

these communities represents an essential resource for the effectiveness of mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem recovery strategies.

Transparency and monitoring

- 4.8.** A potential joint work programme should seek to promote the interoperability of monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) systems where possible, thereby encouraging greater compatibility and harmonization in reporting. By fostering coherence and interoperability across data sources and data collection, metrics and methodologies, this work would contribute to clearer identification of gaps and reduced reporting burden on parties.
- 4.9.** Similarly, this programme should contribute to enhancing transparency and monitoring of financial flows, in order to more accurately assess these movements. This would contribute to the differentiation of resources allocated to climate, biodiversity, and desertification and land degradation, with a view to preventing double counting.
- 4.10.** Efforts in this direction would open up the opportunity for innovative financial mechanisms that generate co-benefits across national climate change, biodiversity, and desertification-related objectives, including payments for ecosystem services.

Conservation and restoration of ecosystems

- 4.11.** The conservation and restoration of ecosystems is a highly effective strategy for delivering co-benefits for climate and biodiversity, in the light of the ecosystem services they provide. However, the diversity of national realities requires an inclusive approach. While forests are a central element for some countries, other parties face different contexts; in arid and desert ecosystems, soil degradation challenges are a priority; and for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), ocean impacts represent an existential issue.
- 4.12.** The conservation and restoration of ecosystems is therefore a paradigmatic synergistic strategy, in that it contributes to the objectives of the three Rio Conventions. In this context, a potential joint work programme should promote the creation of innovative mechanisms – including financial instruments – that foster long-term public policies that deliver co-benefits for climate, biodiversity, and desertification and land degradation.
- 4.13.** One such example is the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), proposed by Brazil. The TFFF will be an innovative initiative to raise substantial and permanent funding from both public and private sources, aiming to provide long-term, results-

based financial support to tropical forest countries for the conservation and restoration of their forests, delivering benefits for the entire global community.¹

- 4.14.** The importance of forests cannot be overstated, but they are not the only ecosystems facing grave challenges. There exist gaps in the environmental finance landscape when it comes to creating incentives to ensure that ecosystems are financially more valuable when conserved than when destroyed. The joint work programme could explore other innovative mechanisms for the conservation and restoration of ecosystems, including the restoration of degraded areas.

Bioeconomy

- 4.15.** The bioeconomy is a promising solution for simultaneously combating climate change, protecting biodiversity and promoting sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions. By harnessing the power of nature in innovative ways, the bioeconomy has the potential to synergistically contribute to achieving the objectives of the Rio Conventions while advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- 4.16.** At its core, the bioeconomy is a departure from the traditional linear economy, which relies heavily on finite fossil fuels and raw materials. Instead, it is based on the sustainable use of biological potential through traditional and scientific knowledge. It encompasses diverse economic activities including, but not limited to, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, timber and non-timber forest products, food, energy, biotechnology, healthcare and a long list of bio-based industries.
- 4.17.** The bioeconomy is a knowledge-based development model that embraces very new technologies, such as bio-based nanomaterials, as well as very old technologies, such as the traditional use and management of biodiversity. It is a powerful tool for promoting sustainability in all countries, regardless of the biodiversity present in their territories. The bioeconomy is therefore a universal productive paradigm that can be implemented by countries at all levels of development and by economic activities of all sizes, and it can take different forms, from small-scale activities based on traditional knowledge to large-scale operations based on advanced technology.
- 4.18.** In summary, the bioeconomy can be a powerful synergistic tool in a just transition to a low-carbon economy, creating local value by structuring sustainable production chains, generating income, employment and innovation, and helping to protect biodiversity and avoid land degradation. A possible joint work programme should explore the potential of the bioeconomy to deliver results for climate, biodiversity, and desertification and land degradation.

¹ While the TFFF will contribute directly to the objectives of all three Rio Conventions, it is not established as a financial mechanism under any of their frameworks.

Joint Liaison Group

- 4.19.** In 2001, the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) was established as an informal forum for exchanging information, exploring opportunities for synergistic activities, and strengthening coordination among the secretariats of the Rio Conventions. The JLG operated consistently between 2001 and 2016, but has not published any meeting minutes since then.²
- 4.20.** The JLG should be revitalized, in order to serve as an effective tool for ongoing technical collaboration between the Rio Conventions under a potential joint work programme. A revived JLG could promote the exchange of experiences and the identification of opportunities for coordinated action, always guided by the decisions of the parties, in line with the bottom-up nature of the Conventions.
- 4.21.** The JLG could also provide support to parties in creating and implementing policies that simultaneously contribute to climate, biodiversity, and desertification and land degradation targets. To lend greater legitimacy to the work of the JLG, a clear mandate from the parties to the Rio Conventions would be essential, as guidance from the secretariats alone would not be sufficient.
- 4.22.** Brazil is confident that these elements provide a consistent blueprint to guide the UNFCCC in its cooperation with the CBD and the UNCCD on synergies across the Rio Conventions.

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² <https://unfccc.int/about-us/about-the-secretariat/the-joint-liaison-group>, access on 22 September 2025.