

Concept note and agenda for webinar

“Nature-based solutions:

synergies and convergence across the Rio Conventions”

28 July 2026, 10:00 am- 11:15 am (Panama time) (online)

Webpage: <https://leap.unep.org/es/about/meetings/webinar-nature-based-solutions-synergies-and-convergence-among-rio-conventions>

Registration: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/YkHO7VM1SSG3ZhxEOR-l3Q>

Since its establishment in 1972, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), working with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, has played — and continues to play — a key role in promoting and strengthening the environmental rule of law. The UNEP Law Division, as secretariat of the Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law, supports capacity-building activities to make environmental law more effective at every level and among all relevant actors, and promotes the role of environmental law within effective environmental governance.

2026 is an unprecedented year for multilateral environmental governance and cooperation: all three Rio Conventions¹ are taking place this year — a “Triple COP” year. It opens with UNCCD COP17 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (17–28 August), continues with CBD COP17 in Yerevan, Armenia (19–30 October), and concludes with UNFCCC COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye (9–20 November). This alignment creates a unique opportunity to enhance the synergies and pursue coherence across land, biodiversity and climate to address the triple planetary crisis. In this context, synergies are defined as **“the additional benefits and greater impact achieved when actions for climate, biodiversity and land are planned and implemented together.”**² Furthermore, synergies involve “breaking down silos, aligning national strategies, sharing data, harmonizing reporting, and designing projects that deliver multiple gains (...) reduce costs (...) and attract funding.”³ This brings the case forward of implementing mutually-supportive legal tools and policy approaches to address the interconnected environmental crisis, and favors intersectoral and multilevel coordination.⁴

As defined at the 5th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2), nature-based solutions (NbS) are

“actions aimed at protecting, conserving, restoring, and sustainably managing natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits”.

¹ The “Rio Conventions” are the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD). Although neither adopted nor signed at the Rio Conference, the UNCCD is also regarded as part of the ‘Rio Conventions’. The UNCCD is the single convention that has emerged as an outcome from Agenda 21.

² See <https://rioconventions.org/rio-synergies-triple-impact-planet-and-people>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ UNEP (2025). From Silos To Synergies Linking Planning, Finance, and Monitoring for Coherent Action on Climate, Biodiversity, and Land. (white paper) Supported by the BMUKN.

As a result, NbS offer a unique point of convergence among the Rio Conventions. They contribute significantly to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), climate change adaptation & mitigation and land degradation goals. Furthermore, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) has recognised that NbS respect social and environmental safeguards, in line with the three ***“Rio conventions” (...), including such safeguards for local communities and indigenous peoples” (UNEA 2022: 2).*** This makes the NbS not only an environmental tool but a mechanism for legal and institutional integration for the Rio Conventions, further anchored in sustainable development. Furthermore, it has been estimated that NBS could deliver more than one third of emissions reductions required by 2030 to keep global warming close to 2°C, with a mitigation potential of approximately 10-12 gigatons of carbon dioxide annually.⁵

On top of that, NbS have been progressively incorporated into Nationally determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). This is also mirrored in the first Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement, which noted the relevance of conserving, protecting, and restoring nature and ecosystems while calling for alignment with the GBF and encouraging countries to implement “integrated, multi-sectoral solutions,” such as NbS among others (UNFCCC, 2023a, paras. 33, 55).

UNEP has a clear mandate to support Member States in this regard. Through UNEA resolution 6/4 and related resolutions on promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for the national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (resolutions 6/4 and 6/6), UNEA has called for stronger synergistic action and tasked UNEP with supporting its delivery. Additionally, the present initiative is firmly grounded in the mandates of the three Rio Conventions to build capacity and exchange knowledge, both in their texts and in subsequent decisions of their Conferences of the Parties.⁶ Such cross-convention cooperation is itself well established: the three secretariats act through the **Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions** and, most recently, through the [Rio Conventions Joint Capacity-building Programme](#).

Additionally, at the regional level, the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean determined during its 2024 special session that promoting synergies among the Rio Conventions would be one of its work priorities—a decision reinforced by the Forum’s Bureau at its meeting in May 2026. Accordingly, UNEP, through its Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, seeks to support dialogue and cooperation on this matter among the countries of the region, with a view to contributing to the aforementioned global processes.

Against this background, the Webinar convenes legal and policy experts and practitioners from the Latin American Region to present UNEP’s concrete initiatives, methodologies and tools to advance and translate synergies across the Rio Conventions into concrete, actionable solutions and to examine NbS as a tool for legal and institutional integration.

⁵ B.W. Griscom et al., “Natural climate solutions”, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, vol. 114, no. 44 (October 2017), <https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/early/2017/10/11/1710465114.full.pdf>; B.W. Griscom et al., “National mitigation potential from natural climate solutions in the tropics”, Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B, vol. 375, no. 1794 (March 2020), <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rstb.2019.0126>.

⁶ UNFCCC Article 6 (Action for Climate Empowerment) and the Glasgow Work Programme (decisions 18/CP.26 and 22/CMA.3); CBD Articles 12 and 13 (decision 15/8); and UNCCD Article 19 and decision 2/COP.16.

ORGANISATION	
Title	<i>"Nature-based solutions: synergies and convergence across the Rio Conventions"</i>
Date & venue	28 July 2026, online (Zoom)
Time	10:00 am – 11.15 am (Panama time) (75 minutes)
Language	The webinar will be held online in Spanish. The presentations will be recorded and made available on the UNEP-LEAP website https://leap.unep.org/es/about/meetings/webinar-nature-based-solutions-synergies-and-convergence-among-rio-conventions
Objectives	- Present and analyse the case of NbS as a cross-cutting concept for legal and institutional integration advancing objectives and targets of climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and land degradation neutrality (NDCs/NAPs, NBSAPs, NAPs/LDN targets); - Showcase NbS as a catalyst for integrated action across the Rio Conventions; - Explore how countries can align national planning processes to strengthen synergies across the Rio Conventions; - Showcase UNEP's initiative and tools that support synergies and convergence across the Rio Conventions.
Expected outcomes	- Identification of legal and governance tools for coherence across land, biodiversity and climate; - Cross-sectoral recommendations and possible follow-up actions; - Greater awareness among LA stakeholders of UNEP's synergies initiatives, tools and methodologies; - Shared good practices on national synergies and NBS across the Rio Conventions; - Strengthened visibility of the Montevideo Programme and UNEP's support to MEA implementation.
Target audience	MEA Focal Points from Latin America, Environmental law practitioners; Academia; Montevideo Programme V national focal points from Latin America; National Focal points of the three Rio Conventions; negotiators and policymakers; civil society; and members of professional networks.
Organizer	UNEP Law Division.
Focal point	Catalina Pizarro (catalina.pizarro@un.org)

Annotated agenda (provisional)

Time	Annotated agenda (provisional)	
10:00 – 10:05 (5 min)	1. Welcome & opening remarks by UNEP <i>[Framing of the webinar & objectives of the session]</i>	Andrea Rizzo, Head, Governance Section, UNEP Law Division
10:05 – 10:15 (10 min)	2. Session 1 – Scene-setter: Nature- based solutions: across the three Rio Conventions - What are NbS? Definition adopted in the framework of the UNEA. Examples. - What convergence in the Triple COP year could mean for international sustainable development law and governance, and to accelerate the NBS agenda, including the upcoming review of the KMGBF.	Prof. Dr. Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger Director, Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL)
10:15 – 10:35 (20 min)	3. Session 2 – Experiences from the ground: LAC Countries scaling up NbS - Integrating NbS into legislation, policies and planning instruments. - Institutional mechanisms across climate, nature and land.	3 Pilot Countries ⁷ : Camila Zepeda, Head of the International Affairs Unit at Mexico's Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) (7 min) Representative from Colombia (7 min) (TBC) Representative from Panama (7 min) (TBC)
10:35 – 10:45 (10 min)	4. Session 3 – Scaling finance into NbS⁸ - Identification and approaches of intersections among climate and biodiversity objectives in GEF Projects to scale up the benefits of NBS. - Recommendations from the Secretariat for NBS Projects to better incorporate these scaling approaches.	Juan Pablo Hoffmaister, GEF Specialist, GEF Secretariat
10:45 – 11:00 (15 min)	5. Expectations ahead of the “Triple COP”. How MEA Secretariats from the three Rio Conventions are collaborating to deliver synergies.	CBD secretariat (5 min) (TBC) Alejandro Kilpatrick, UNFCCC secretariat (5 min) UNCCD secretariat (5 min) (TBC)
11:00 – 11:10	6. Questions & answers from the audience	Moderated by UNEP Law Division

⁷ The selection of pilot countries draws from the publication of the GIZ developed under the Global Project "Strengthening National Implementation of Global Biodiversity Targets" and the EU's Euroclima programme (2025) "Building Synergies Between Biodiversity and Climate Insights from countries on NBSAP and NDC planning and implementation", Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH <https://nbsapaccelerator.org/new-global-report-highlights-synergies-between-climate-and-biodiversity-action/>.

⁸ See Bierbaum, R, 2020. Nature-based solutions and the GEF. A STAP Advisory Document. Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel to the Global Environment Facility. Washington, DC.

Time	Annotated agenda (provisional)	
(10 min)		
11:10 – 11:15 (5 min)	7. Recap and closing remarks • Nature-Based Solutions: Towards a legal and policy approach for Joint Implementation of Climate, Biodiversity and Land Commitments • Summary of key insights, possible follow-up; thanks to participants.	UNEP Law Division.