

Earth System Governance Special Issue

**“The Governance of Biodiversity Recovery:  
From Global Targets to Sectoral Action”**

You are invited to contribute to an upcoming Special Issue of the Earth System Governance journal on *The Governance of Biodiversity Recovery: From Global Targets to Sectoral Action*. [Hens Runhaar](#) (Utrecht University, the Netherlands) and [Yves Zinngrebe](#) (Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, Germany) will serve as guest editors.



The ongoing loss in nature and biodiversity due to human activity, exacerbated by climate change, is one of the most pressing sustainability challenges today (Díaz et al., 2019; Shukla et al., 2019; Nielsen et al., 2021). Governments and companies have committed themselves to contributing to global biodiversity targets, as defined by the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; particularly SDG14 Life Below Water and SDG15 Life on Land). In 2019 the European Commission launched the ambitious Green Deal, including an ambitious biodiversity and ‘farm to fork’ strategies with ambitious targets for restoring and protecting biodiversity (EC, 2019). For *actual* biodiversity recovery, targets do not suffice, however. It is crucial that national governments as well as private companies adopt these targets, integrate these targets in sectoral policies and plans, and implement concrete measures. *Integration* in sectoral policies and plans for e.g. food and transport is considered a promising governance approach, because it can directly address the driving forces of biodiversity loss (Runhaar et al., 2020). In fact, this is also what the CBD aims for. In this way, the integration or ‘*mainstreaming*’ of biodiversity targets can complement more classical biodiversity governance based on the assignment and management of protected areas (Whitehorn et al., 2019; Zinngrebe et al., 2022).

This special issue aims to further our understanding of how and the extent to which integration of biodiversity targets in public and private sectoral policies ‘works’ in terms of implementation and results, to provide in-depth insights into the critical barriers and challenges that impede a stronger integration. We invite contributions that address one or more of the following questions:

- How are biodiversity targets adopted and integrated, and why – what factors account for action as well as non-action? More particularly, what explains differences in degrees of integration (from ‘add-on’ to ‘transformative change’)? What is the steering power of global targets such as those of the CBD as opposed to other triggers for change?
- How and to what extent does biodiversity mainstreaming at certain levels of government affect mainstreaming at other levels? In other words, what can we learn about the multi-level governance of biodiversity mainstreaming?
- How can ‘telecoupled’ biodiversity impacts linking geographically distanced causes and effects be governed - think of tropical deforestation to supply resources for European consumption of e.g. soy and palm oil?
- How do different public and private biodiversity integration actions interact? Is there evidence that action from the government stimulates private action or the other way around, or do we observe ‘crowding out’ effects?
- How are sector-specific biodiversity targets implemented and with what *results* in terms of outputs (concrete measures such as regulations or ecolabels), outcomes (behavioural change among companies, consumers, farmers etc.), and impacts (on driving forces of biodiversity loss, such as deforestation due to unsustainable sourcing, habitat restoration, or even evidence of biodiversity recovery)? What are key enablers and barriers and how can these be manipulated?

- What mechanisms have been developed to secure effective mainstreaming? What enabling factors do support or hinder policy integration?
- To what extent do new concepts that aim to reconcile nature conservation with economic and social benefits such as ‘ecosystem based adaptation’, ‘nature based solutions’, ‘eco-engineering’, and ‘natural capital’ facilitate and enhance the mainstreaming of biodiversity targets?
- What is the role of law (international, regional, domestic) in achieving biodiversity targets and providing regulatory frameworks for implementation processes? What do we know about the ability of legal provisions to give political priority to biodiversity considerations? In particular, how is progress monitored and enforced, and accountability of responsible actors secured?

The focus is on *national policies* and *private initiatives beyond the individual company level* (except for when this has sector-wide implications). In this way we aim to get a better understanding of what drives or impedes the more structural embedding of biodiversity into sectoral policies and plans.

We are particularly interested in contributions that provide robust empirical evidence (either self-collected or based on systematic reviews and syntheses of the literature) but also call for papers that aim to conceptually move the debate forward substantially by, for instance, asking novel questions.

Submissions may take the form of Perspectives of 2-4,000 words, Reviews of up to 12,000 words, and Research Articles of 8-10,000 words (see explanations [here](#)).

If you are interested in contributing to this Special Issue, please send an abstract of 300 words maximum to guest editors Hens Runhaar at [h.a.c.runhaar@uu.nl](mailto:h.a.c.runhaar@uu.nl) and to Yves Zinngrebe at [yves.zinngrebe@ufz.de](mailto:yves.zinngrebe@ufz.de) by 13 March 2022. A selected number of authors will then be invited to submit full papers to be reviewed and considered for inclusion in the special issue based on the following criteria: (a) fit in overall theme; (b) complementarity; (c) originality and contribution to the subject; and (d) transparency and traceability of scientific argumentation. Full papers will be due by 1 September 2022. We aim for publication of the Special Issue by the end of 2022, but accepted individual papers will be published online earlier. All articles will be subject to double-blind, peer review.

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