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What is the 2019 agenda for biodiversity?

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The future of biodiversity management at the global level is expected to take the form of a post-2020 global framework that will be drawn up at COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in China towards the end of 2020; it will then be rolled out at regional and national scales. This future is actively being prepared in 2019, as several major diplomatic, scientific and (geo)political events punctuate this year's agenda, and will help shape the answers to the essential questions that structure the current debates: what commitments should be made and, above all, how can we reinforce biodiversity action? As part of its project to link biodiversity erosion to its causes, and to ensure that the necessary socio-economic transformations are discussed and implemented, IDDRI will participate in these events (international negotiations, scientific advances, national policies) during 2019, and work to increase their impact in terms of public policies.

Opening negotiations on the post-2020 biodiversity framework

The year 2019 is crucial for the preparation and mobilisation of the “Global Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework”, the current name of the replacement for the [Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets](#), adopted in 2010 in Nagoya (Japan). Since January, a series of “[regional consultations](#)” have been and will be organised around the world: in Nagoya at the end of January for Asia-Pacific, in Bonn (Germany) at the end of March for Western Europe, in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in early April for Africa, in Belgrade (Serbia) in mid-April for Central and Eastern Europe, in Montevideo (Uruguay) in mid-May for Latin America. During these meetings, representatives of the different States of each region identify both the main achievements of the current governance frameworks that should be maintained, and the possible innovation pathways for the post-2020 period. The [Trondheim conference](#) (Norway) in July, which will bring experts and decision-makers together, will be the informal meeting room that will inform official negotiations with its analyses and proposals. Following this, the negotiation chapter will begin. The first meeting of the CBD Working Group should be held at the end of August, to be followed by a second meeting in November, as well as the meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body (SBSTTA): it is these occasions that will constitute the first formal negotiations on the content of the post-2020 framework, and that will reveal the lines of tension, oppositions and coalitions that are already forming, and will provide a better guide of what we should expect for 2020. IDDRI will monitor these negotiations and publish recommendations for the structure and content of this post-2020 framework, and will continue its liaison work—[towards the French public](#) but also at international events, in the [framework of the CBD](#) or [elsewhere](#)—and its facilitation—through [negotiation workshops](#).

A major update and summary of scientific findings

At the same time, France is hosting the [7th plenary conference of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services \(IPBES\)](#) at the end of April. During this session the [Global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services](#) will be published—the first since 2005—prepared by hundreds of scientists and which should highlight and clarify the diagnosis of global biodiversity collapse. These conclusions must be taken into account for political implementation. In particular, the report will no doubt show that the “diseases” affecting biodiversity are well known, as well as their causes. IDDRI will provide an analysis of the IPBES global assessment, and will draw lessons for governments and companies seeking to make commitments to the ending of biodiversity-damaging practices, taking into account regional specificities, at least on the continental scale. For example, precise, medium-term commitments on the volume and nature of pesticide use in Europe would be welcomed¹.

The publication of this report should also enable the strengthening of the political momentum around biodiversity, and stimulate the [action agenda for biodiversity](#) launched at the CBD’s COP14, for example by drafting initiatives aiming to address the challenges highlighted by IPBES.

Furthermore, there will be a strong presence of biodiversity topics in the climate talks this year. A [Nature-Based Solutions \(NBS\)](#) project will be led by the Chinese President Xi Jinping at the UN climate summit in September, and NBS will be at the heart of Costa Rica’s climate pre-COP and very likely of the COP25 in Chile in December. From these discussions, it will be important to identify the perspectives for climate and biodiversity actors, to ensure they can work together in the coming years, rather than, as is often the case currently, continuing to ignore each other. IDDRI will contribute to these reflections by publishing its analyses on the [mobilisation of climate finance to support NBS deployment](#), on the [strategic dimensions of NBS implementation](#), as well as on the synergies to be developed in negotiations on biodiversity, climate and oceans, regarding cross-cutting topics such as [carbon neutrality](#) for example.

What are the national-level implementation priorities?

At the French level, the questions will focus mainly on how to implement commitments that have already been made.

Regarding land take, in its July 2018 [biodiversity plan](#), the government has set out to achieve the “zero net land take” objective, by a date that remains to be determined. This commitment refers to two key questions, which will have to be answered this year, although since last summer the authorities have not been able to establish a dialogue mechanism that would be open to stakeholders: 1) the concept of “net” land take means that land take will still be possible (an end to all new construction is not realistic), but that in addition to a drastic reduction, it will be necessary to compensate land use by ecological restoration: how, with whom, what approaches and what means? 2) The deadline has not yet been defined, particularly due to the very high ambition of this commitment: the question is that of transforming a high but vague ambition into a plan with institutional and economic means.

Regarding “imported” deforestation, via the consumption of products involved in the deforestation of tropical forests, France is the first European country to have adopted a [national strategy](#) at the end of 2018. Its implementation involves a compromise strategy, that of cooperation and bilateral aid: France is committed to helping producing countries to ensure that their food exports do not damage their natural heritage. IDDRI works on the value chain of some of these commodities and seeks to identify pathways of progress that take into account the globalised social and economic context. This year will see the beginning of this cooperation policy, and will have to answer the question of its content and its model: will the goal be mainly to push for agronomic “intensification” of existing crops that would avoid the need for new land (which would also imply the constraining of agricultural expansion)? Will it be to help trace and separate the products involved in the deforestation from other products, while the current labels are still not very effective in the fight against deforestation? Will it be to help authorities and local partners to plan and control their land use?

In addition, the government has recently reactivated, rather discreetly at present, the campaign promise of Emmanuel Macron, who pledged to spend 150 million euros on payments for ecosystem services (PES) benefiting farmers who contribute positively to biodiversity and who are economically fragile, especially in the mountains. A cautious, exploratory and methodological study was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture. IDDRI participates in its steering, and insists on the importance of thinking about these issues in connection with the existing system of economic transfers to agriculture. The question is the effectiveness of such a measure: are we planning to allocate budgets in addition to the existing subsidies of French agriculture, or would it be a reconversion or a redirection of existing mechanisms? What conditionalities, environmental and economic rationales, and what institutional mechanism should be mobilized?

Progress on the French agenda will be important for the international agenda. To be able to achieve progress at the COP 15 in 2020 in China, France must demonstrate that it is indeed possible for a government to meet its domestic commitments, especially when they are ambitious. International biodiversity governance has suffered too much from a lack of national implementation of global commitments, which has reduced global goals to merely a wish list. It is time to show that a different way forward is possible.

Photo credit: [Nathan Horrenberger](#)

¹ It is worth recalling here the presidential proposal to halve the volume of pesticides by 2025, which, if taken up by the CBD member countries, at least the developed countries, would be a clear and precise objective targeting identified drivers. <https://www.20minutes.fr/planete/2467391-20190307-grand-debat-national-pesticides-carbone-macron-veut-aller-plus-fort-plus-vite-climat>

BIODIVERSITÉ	ARTIFICIALISATION DES SOLS	SOLUTIONS FONDÉES SUR LA NATURE
CBD INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS	DEFORESTATION	CARBON NEUTRALITY