

BLOG POST December 11th 2025

Is the global biodiversity agenda at a dead end?

Auteur

Agnès Hallosserie

Director, Biodiversity programme

 Reading time: 5 min



Against a backdrop of escalating security and economic tensions, biodiversity appears to have been pushed far down the list of countries' priorities. Numerous setbacks can indeed be observed in public policy,^{[1](#)} particularly in Europe, moving us further from the targets adopted by all countries in the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). COP17 on biodiversity, scheduled for October 2026 in Armenia, is set to provide a mid-term review of GBF implementation ([IDDRI, 2025b](#)): will it be forced to acknowledge that the biodiversity agenda has been sidelined?

Novel approaches to biodiversity outside traditional forums in 2025

Overshadowed by turbulent (geo)political headlines, several international meetings important to biodiversity decision-makers and stakeholders took place in 2025, including the [second part](#) of biodiversity COP16 in February and the [World Conservation Congress](#) in October. However, it was at climate COP30, held in Belém, Brazil in November, that progress was made for biodiversity, with elements in the decision text and commitments supporting agricultural and forestry adaptation, tropical forest preservation and Indigenous land rights,^{[2](#)} as well as substantive discussions

among economic actors on nature-related issues at the São Paulo pre-COP. Leading the charge, the launch of the Tropical Forest Forever Fund (TFFF) aims to redistribute between \$2 and \$4 billion annually to developing tropical countries that have preserved their forests. The fund will take several years to become operational. Announcements at COP30 raised approximately [\\$6.6 billion in initial contributions](#), which are expected to reach \$25 billion in order to generate the anticipated redistribution amounts on financial markets.

COP30 also saw the launch of the Bioeconomy Challenge, which aims to identify and develop over three years the governance frameworks needed to implement the [G20's High-Level Principles](#) adopted during Brazil's 2024 presidency. While this initiative is valuable for placing biodiversity at the heart of development strategies—as seen in certain recent dedicated regional or national strategies, particularly in Latin America and Southern Africa—the term ‘bioeconomy’ covers a very broad spectrum that is not synonymous with sustainability or positive outcomes for biodiversity and communities ([IDDRI, 2025c](#)). One challenge will therefore be to identify the key conditions for developing the socio-bioeconomy, which relies on still underdeveloped value chains (such as non-timber forest products like açai or rooibos) that are closely linked to the practices of indigenous and local communities and to biodiversity protection in their territories. Another challenge will be to keep sight of the priority that must be given to transitioning primary sectors away from predominantly unsustainable practices (agriculture, fishing, forestry), which the shift toward bioeconomy could intensify, particularly for biofuel or biomaterial production.

2026: the challenge of a pragmatic assessment of biodiversity policies

The cases presented above are just one illustration among many of the challenges facing the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) global progress review: attempting a comprehensive assessment would be unrealistic. Policies aimed at achieving the 2030 biodiversity targets are likely to show delays overall or even pauses and rollbacks (only 62 out of 196 countries have submitted a national strategy to date, and implementation reports for those that have will show limited, mixed results). However, a significant share of the measures that determine whether GBF targets are met fall under political arenas covering themes or sectors other than biodiversity, and are implemented by non-state actors, only some of which are connected to the CBD. When it comes to initiatives implemented by local communities, associations, or businesses, they are difficult for national governments to centralize and analyze when reporting on biodiversity progress in their countries.

Two groups of actors seem particularly worth observing: financial stability and economic financing actors, and key economic actors—namely, businesses.

Regarding long-term financing, multilateral and national development banks have made notable transparency efforts including the [practical guide published by several of them at COP30](#). The Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund) are also directly concerned by these directions. Their annual meetings, held in spring and autumn, may provide an opportunity to formally adopt improved monitoring practices and priorities in project selection internally. More broadly, the ability of public financing to leverage private financing will be key. We can already observe early momentum in this area, as with this [recent report](#) also launched at COP30, which proposes standards for public-private partnerships. Furthermore, following the [European Central Bank's analysis](#), it will be important to monitor the recognition of biodiversity's key role in regional and global financial stability. Equally important are initiatives aimed at reducing uninsurability risks—linked particularly to ecosystems' growing inability to ensure societies' resilience in the face of extreme climate events. These include initiatives launched by the [Insurance Development Forum \(IDF\)](#) and the [United Nations Environment Programme's \(UNEP\) Forum for Insurance Transition \(FIT\)](#).

Regarding businesses, early 2026 will be marked by the World Economic Forum and IPBES's 12th plenary session, which will examine a report dedicated to the link between businesses and biodiversity. While [business leaders assessed](#) geopolitical and disinformation risks as the most harmful to business in the short term at recent editions, climate risks and those linked to biodiversity and natural resource erosion remain very much present and are seen as more significant in the medium term (10 years). In light of efforts undertaken by certain pioneers, including major international corporations, business voices are rising to uphold biodiversity conservation policies, such as the [European regulation on imported deforestation](#). These positions contradict the argument [put forward by the European Council](#) that recent environmental regulation has harmed business. As policy frameworks are weakened, voluntary corporate commitments are increasingly expected. The IPBES report will reinforce this shift by outlining how businesses can better integrate biodiversity and how decision-makers can support these efforts. These discussions should extend beyond the issue primarily addressed today, i.e. corporate reporting on biodiversity. In this regard, the problem is not so much the lack of methodologies for measuring the impact and risks of transition as the proliferation of approaches, both in [Asia](#) and Europe. Harmonizing these standards and metrics could usefully focus corporate action.

Structural transformations in favour of biodiversity therefore appear to be continuing in certain cases, against the backdrop of an environmental agenda under open attack. The various 2026 meetings preceding COP17—though not connected to the CBD process—demonstrate that sectors and regions having committed to transition pathways in recent years have not given up on biodiversity.

1

In particular, the international race for critical minerals currently does not prioritize the environmental and social conditions of their extraction ([IDDRI, 2025a](#)). Examples in Europe include recent [European Parliament votes](#) on the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D) and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), the [Health Commissioner's proposal](#) on pesticide authorization procedures, and the [European Commission's presentation](#) of the new European bioeconomy strategy.

2

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/cop30-key-outcomes-for-food-forests-land-and-nature-at-the-un-climate-talks-in-belem/>

BIODIVERSITÉ

BIODIVERSITÉ ET DÉVELOPPEMENT

FINANCEMENT BIODIVERSITÉ

CBD INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS