



# POLICY BRIEF //

## MANAGING NATURE TO PROVIDE KEY BENEFITS TO PEOPLE

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December 2022

# 01/ KEY MESSAGES

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**ABOUT THIS POLICY BRIEF** / This policy brief is based on the perceptions of stakeholders in biodiversity, climate, and sustainable development issues in Madagascar, including public and private sectors, civil society organizations and local communities that depend on nature for their daily lives. It aims to present the importance of nature and the need for its conservation. It highlights how nature can be managed to deliver key benefits to people and provides examples of practices by conservation organizations, the private sector, and a multi-stakeholder coalition. Furthermore, it proposes actions to ensure coherent and effective integration of biodiversity, climate, and sustainable development into the policies, programs, and activities of these various actors. Specifically, it addresses the update of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in Madagascar to align with the goals of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), involving the government, indigenous peoples and local communities,<sup>1</sup> the private sector, and civil society. The key messages are as follows:

**1** Issues about climate, biodiversity and sustainable development are universal, everyone is concerned and responsible.

**2** States and Governments, well beyond the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, must also commit to protecting, restoring and sustainably managing nature.

**3** Nature management actions can be carried out at the level of different organizations, or in the form of a coalition: everyone does what they can but to be more successful everyone can join hands.

**4** Partnership is key, together we are stronger, and we can go further.

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<sup>1</sup> Including indigenous peoples and local communities in the NBSAP update process acknowledges their unique contributions, respects their rights, promotes cultural diversity, enhances the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation efforts, gains buy-in, and fosters more equitable and sustainable outcomes for all stakeholders involved.



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# 02/ INTRODUCTION: PEOPLE LIVING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

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The fact that nature and the biodiversity that composes it contributes significantly to the well-being of people is universal but unfortunately not always valued and rather taken for granted. Nature provides us with our food, the water we drink and use, materials for our homes, modes of transport and clothing. Nature makes our life on earth possible: trees purify air and water, bacteria break down waste, bees pollinate plants and crops and tree roots hold the soil together. Nature reflects our cultures and can even be symbolic at local, national and global levels. Without nature these benefits would not be possible. Nature is the basis of our lives.

However, several reasons - including human activities - have led to an alteration of nature and the destruction of biodiversity to a point where it can no longer provide for our needs effectively. We extract too many natural resources. We destroy forests to turn them into agricultural land or cities. We emit an abundance of greenhouse gases. All this has led to almost catastrophic situations at the global level not only for the climate, but also for biodiversity, the foundation of our lives.

Protection and restoration of biodiversity has become a global priority. Policies and strategies are being put in place at the global level to ensure that protection and restoration of nature is effective. The post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is one of these policies. In place of the previous Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, it was finalized and adopted during the fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022 in Montreal.

To achieve the GBF's 2050 vision of people living in harmony with nature, the 2030 mission is to urgently take action to stop and reverse the loss of biodiversity, to restore nature for the benefit of people and the planet by conserving and responsibly using biodiversity. It also seeks to ensure the fair

and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources, while providing the required resources for implementation. Realizing this vision at the national level requires urgent action by various actors including governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, private sector and civil society. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) plays a crucial role in realizing the GBF's vision by guiding and coordinating national efforts to conserve and sustainably use their biodiversity. This policy brief focuses on key issues that will be addressed according to GBF targets 8, 10 and 11, defined in BOX 1.

## **BOX 1: Post-2020 GBF Targets that will address the key issues defined in this policy brief**

**TARGET 8** / Minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solution and/or ecosystem-based approaches, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity.

**TARGET 10** / Ensure that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably, in particular through the sustainable use of biodiversity, including through a substantial increase of the application of biodiversity friendly practices, such as sustainable intensification, agroecological and other innovative approaches, contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of these production systems, and to food security, conserving and restoring biodiversity and maintaining nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services.

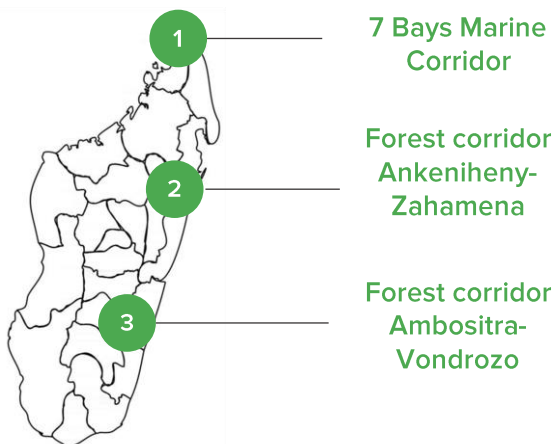
**TARGET 11** / Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, such as the regulation of air, water and climate, soil health, pollination and reduction of disease risk, as well as protection from natural hazards and disasters, through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches for the benefit of all people and nature.

# 03/ ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES RELATED TO CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We must join hands to be able to go further. As our ancestors used to say, *“those who unite are a rock, while those who are separated are sand”*. It is true that together we are stronger. It is encouraging to see that it is no longer only organizations dedicated to the environment and its conservation, but also various actors and stakeholders, who now contribute in their own way to nature conservation; significant impacts have been observed.

**EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY** / Several restoration activities are currently being implemented by **conservation organizations**, while involving key partners and stakeholders at the local level including communities, authorities and associations. This involvement is essential not only for the identification of intervention sites, but also to ensure that they take ownership of the activities and to avoid land problems. Communities themselves are therefore empowered and benefits are tangible to them, so they are motivated to pursue them. Communities benefit from knowledge and capacity building on practices such as nature-based solutions, and awareness of the types of benefits they can derive from nature.

The most notable activities of **CI Madagascar** are focused on restoration, agroforestry and reforestation on three ecological corridors, two of which are forest and one marine (see map below).



When these three areas were not yet protected areas, human pressures limited their productivity and led to a huge loss of biodiversity and thus, a reduction in the benefits that local people could derive.

The establishment of protected areas, and their co-management with **local communities**, have allowed the sustainable use of resources and biodiversity. The planting of various native trees in areas can lead to increased productivity and resilience, as well as potential economic benefits through cash crops or the preservation of species habitats (such as mangroves). This can provide both local and national economic benefits.

The **private sector** is increasingly incorporating sustainable development, biodiversity and climate into their activities, particularly through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies. Examples of such practices include financial support for mangrove reforestation by a company focused on air transport, promotion of green energy by a hotel complex, preference for local organic raw materials and the use of biodegradable products and packaging by industries. However, it is important to note that implementing CSR practices can be costly and it is often the larger companies that can afford to prioritize them. Smaller companies may not have the financial resources nor sufficient knowledge to do so.

While there are already initiatives in place that are making a positive impact, the private sector in Madagascar lacks a shared understanding of how it can effectively contribute to sustainable development. While there is a desire to take action, there is a need for a shared understanding of sustainable development and Corporate Social Responsibility in order for the private sector to establish a clear vision for their contributions. This will help to move forward in a unified and effective way.

In Madagascar, conservation organizations and the private sector (among others) are taking concrete actions to support climate, biodiversity and sustainable development. However, it is important to keep in mind the bigger picture, the "whole" which is more than the sum of the different parts. Everything is interlinked, and both the positive and the negative actions are impacting us all.

**TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL, EVERYONE CAN JOIN HANDS** / Collaboration among stakeholders is crucial for achieving greater success. By working together, they can create a model for other countries to follow.

At the global level, there is a growing recognition of the importance of nature, even in areas where it did not necessarily have a place before (for example, in finance). New organizations, concepts and fields such as carbon finance or nature finance are now emerging. Platforms such as the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI) or the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosure (TNFD) bring together private sector and environmental actors to address these issues. Finance experts, for example, presently have the opportunity to engage effectively in sustainable development, climate and biodiversity initiatives.

At the national level, the NatCap (from Natural Capital) Madagascar network brings together different stakeholders including public sector, private sector, civil society and universities to recognize the importance of mainstreaming the value of natural capital in decision making processes and finding ways to reduce future risks and reverse biodiversity loss while reaping the benefits of investing in climate and sustainability matters. The network has recently developed its roadmap and is organized in four main strategic axes: Policy and Governance, Business and Finance, Action Research, Communication and Capitalization. It focuses on specific themes such as the green and blue economy, tools for transitioning to a more sustainable economy, and the application of economic accounting tools for natural capital and green jobs. Discussions among the NatCap network members led to questions about the impact of companies' activities on biodiversity and the

need for financial resources to consider environmental risks.

The diverse backgrounds of the members of the network also allows for rich exchanges and reinforces knowledge and capacity of members. For example, there has been knowledge sharing on sustainable agricultural practices and the green economy, including the sectors related to it which are the most promising (for example, organic farming, waste management, renewable energy production, wastewater management, and transport). These sharing sessions can guide different stakeholders in their own activities and catalyze partnerships they could establish with one another.

Beyond recognizing the importance of natural capital, the network also works to integrate it into any strategic and policy analysis or decisions relating to biodiversity (and can be key to the update of the NBSAP). However, this aspect is currently at an embryonic stage and requires political will beyond the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and its various branches.

**Partnership is key to success.** Different stakeholders can work together and be complementary. Some may have funds but not technical expertise, while others may have technical expertise but not the funds to carry out their activities. Together, they can make notable changes.



# 04/ MOVING FORWARD - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

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Conservation organizations, the private sector and governments - including ministries that are not focused on natural resources - should actively contribute to the conservation, restoration and enhancement of nature, as it is the basis of sustainable development. In Madagascar, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and its branches are often seen as solely responsible, when all actors have an impact and a role to play.

All sectors have a direct or indirect impact on the environment and often depend on it. For example, transport can pollute the air, fishing can exploit fisheries resources, tourism can rely on biodiversity, and crafts and industry often use natural resources. Some cultures can depend on nature, for example the relationships of local communities with natural resources, and festivals like the Zagnaharibe (whale festival) that celebrate nature.

Policy makers at all levels should get involved and ally with other actors such as the private sector, conservation organizations and universities to address this universal problem.

**The following are recommendations that could be implemented at the national or local levels:**

- 1 The budget allocated to sustainable development, climate or biodiversity initiatives should be increased and sustainable across sectors.** Developing a comprehensive and effective National Biodiversity Finance Plan that aligns with the NBSAP is crucial for ensuring sustainable financing for biodiversity conservation and the achievement of conservation targets. It requires collaboration of stakeholders from various sectors to explore innovative financing mechanisms such as carbon finance.
- 2 Each actor should systematically account for environmental issues in their strategies and activities,** so that they can work towards not only minimizing their negative impacts on the environment but also identifying and leveraging opportunities to contribute positively.
- 3 The active participation of individuals and groups from various backgrounds,** including government, business, community organizations and local communities, is crucial for the design and implementation of successful conservation and restoration policy and efforts in a specific area. As a result, each stakeholder contributes their expertise, resources, and influence to collectively work towards the conservation and restoration of biodiversity.
- 4 Providing capacity-building, equipment and financial resources, to local stakeholders,** based on local needs and priorities is essential, to allow them to effectively participate in conservation and restoration efforts.
- 5 Knowledge exchange opportunities** should be arranged frequently to share learnings and foster ideas on sustainable development, climate and biodiversity, Nature-based Solutions and the resulting successes.
- 6 To effectively address sustainable development, climate change, biodiversity, and natural capital,** it is important for all stakeholders to have a **shared understanding and knowledge** of these issues, which can be achieved through capacity building and the wide dissemination of information (for example through certifying mandatory and voluntary training).

**7** All stakeholders should integrate nature into their strategies and activities. For example, the public sector can develop and implement policy for green growth based on local needs; the private sector can support investment and business projects that aim to value natural capital as well as engage in Corporate Social Responsibility; and daily operations and specific events can support zero waste.

**8** Foster complementary partnerships, for example, the private sector funds expert organizations for sustainable development, biodiversity protection, restoration, or climate related activities where the private sector lacks technical expertise and the expert organizations lack funds.

**9** Establishing platforms, or utilizing existing platforms, like the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative at the national level plays a crucial role in facilitating collaboration and driving action towards Nature-based Solutions. Madagascar should leverage the NatCap network to bring together technical experts and the private sector to consider and integrate Nature-based Solutions into decision-making processes and actions across various sectors.



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