

Conservation and Sustainable use of Organic Resources

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Received: 25 May, 2022, Manuscript No. BBOA-22- 67544; **Editor Assigned:** 27 May, 2022, PreQC No. BBOA- 22 - 67544(PQ); **Reviewed:** 10 June, 2022, QC No. BBOA- 22- 67544(Q); **Revised:** 17 June, 2022, Manuscript No. BBOA- 22- 67544(R); **Published:** 24 June, 2022, DOI:- 10.37532/bboa.22.3.3.1.

Abstract

Biodiversity mainstreaming addresses this gap in global conservation practice by "incorporating biodiversity considerations into the policies, strategies and practices of key public and private actors that affect or depend on biodiversity, so that they are managed both locally and globally conserved and used sustainably". Biodiversity mainstreaming aims to change the policies and practices that affect land use outside of protected areas, as well as change development and economic decision-making by demonstrating the importance of conserving biodiversity to achieve results. The practice of mainstreaming is tied to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and is practiced with billions of dollars of investment by development agencies, national government agencies and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its implementing agencies, as well as other donors. It is essential for the long-term survival of biodiversity inside and outside protected areas. However, it is virtually unknown in the mainstream field of conservation science. These needs to change to allow for the careful documentation, analysis, monitoring, publication and improvement of practices that conservation science should provide as a partner for biodiversity mainstreaming practitioners. The situation is ripe for sound coordination and consolidation and the creation of a science-driven biodiversity mainstreaming domain.

Introduction

The establishment and management of protected areas has long been a cornerstone of biodiversity conservation efforts and remains their most widespread and well-known strategy. The protected area approach has been well studied from a variety of social, economic and environmental perspectives and has been extensively evaluated in recent years for its effectiveness in meeting global biodiversity goals. It is clear from such assessments that the current network of protected areas is not sufficient to halt global biodiversity loss. Support to both increase the effectiveness of existing protected areas and to create additional areas, as required by the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Target 11, will require significantly more support from society; Support that can probably only be achieved by demonstrating strong links between biodiversity conservation and human well-being. Even as existing protected areas are made more effective and new ones established, there will always be a need to work outside protected area boundaries, as much of the world's biodiversity is found in such environments. What needs to be done on land and in the water outside protected areas is the subject of numerous debates and works by conservationists. While there have been significant initiatives to work in these vulnerable areas, including ecological corridors and landscape approaches, our collective experience has not been that these have received enough support to meet conservation goals or gain the prominence they deserve.

Because this conservation work outside of formally protected areas has not coalesced around common definitions, scope, and work, we conclude that it has not been consistently pursued or effectively evaluated across multiple geographic and social settings. The Global Environment Facility (GEF), the financial mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), is the world's largest funder of mainstreaming work in the conservation sector. This article builds on this and an earlier review and is complemented by recent work in the field. The document highlights two main points:

1. Mainstreaming is an important set of conservation practices that receive very important political and financial support;
2. The role of mainstreaming in conservation is poorly understood and its body of experience represents a rich body of work from which to learn and help to monitor and improve existing practices and develop a field of biodiversity-driven mainstreaming.