

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Strengthening climate action with co-benefits for biodiversity and human health

Synergies of Planetary Health Research Initiative's recommendations to the Marrakech Partnership

July 2020

Collaboration between Parties and non-Party stakeholders - businesses, investors, cities, regions, and civil society - is enormously important for scaling up climate action, and for addressing biodiversity loss and human health. The Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action will be entering the 2021-2025 period at a critical time during the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, which has been a stark reminder of the interconnectedness between climate change, biodiversity loss and human health. A sustainable recovery should boost climate change mitigation and adaptation action in a manner that also addresses biodiversity loss, ecosystems and human health. Such nature-based solutions present enormous opportunities for synergies within a comprehensive action agenda. By prioritizing nature-based solutions within the Marrakech Partnership, cooperation could be strengthened among state- and non-state actors, stimulating synergic contributions towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We commend the priorities set by the COP26 Presidency, which include nature-based solutions. We heed the UN Climate Statement for a Climate Resilient Recovery of 9 July 2020, whose call for accelerated action in multiple areas includes nature-based solutions.¹

In response to the invitation for submissions, we provide the following feedback.

'Nature-based solutions' cover a wide range of actions, including protection and restoration actions at landscape level, urban nature-based solutions, and re-greening initiatives for the constructed environment. By supporting nature-based solutions, the Marrakech Partnership will add value across many of its thematic areas, including land use, oceans and coastal zones, water, and human settlement. The diversity of nature-based actions presents a multiplicity of opportunities to boost climate action at various scales. Interactions and collaboration between Parties and non-Party stakeholders may vary depending on the type of nature-based solutions. Whereas landscape level actions may fall within the jurisdiction of government policy and regulations, smaller scale or urban greening initiatives may call for government-stakeholder collaboration or stakeholder initiatives that can give support to the implementation of NDCs. Tracking methods for nature-based solutions that reflect the Party/Stakeholder interactions could contribute to catalyzing actions with co-benefits.

The Marrakech Partnership should spearhead collaboration with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Agenda for Nature and People, facilitating mutual learning in the engagement of



non-Party stakeholders in nature-based solutions. The Marrakech partnership together with the CBD should drive the message that climate action not only helps to narrow the global mitigation gap, but also improves livelihoods and help bend the curve in the loss of species and habitat.

The success of the Marrakech Partnership should be evidenced by growing engagement and scale of nature-based solutions, demonstrated by more non-state and subnational commitments to action, but also achievements in terms of improved social and environmental indicators. Existing platforms, such as the NAZCA/Global Climate Action Platform, should work with the data and analytical community to demonstrate progress of non-state and subnational nature-based solutions. Nature-based solutions could strengthen climate action and broaden participation in the Marrakech Partnership by non-Party stakeholders, particularly in developing countries. To strengthen interaction and exchanges, the Marrakech Partnership should convene practitioners, policy makers, and the data and analysis community in events and workshops in the runup to, and during, COPs. Priority topics should be to (1) bolster collaboration among these actors with a view on new cooperative initiatives; (2) determine specific indicators for progress on nature-based climate actions; and, (3) jointly communicate the importance of nature-based climate action.

Recommendations to the Marrakech Partnership

Expand the Marrakech Partnership's interactions with Parties and non-Party Stakeholders to include nature-based solutions and to perform functionally linked activities, such as the organization of high-level technical examination of nature-based solutions; the brokering of new partnerships; and the assessment of progress among non-governmental and local commitments. Reinforce the Marrakech Partnership's collaboration with the Secretariats of the other Rio Conventions, as the CBD and UNCCD; the COP Presidencies of these Conventions; and other UN specialized agencies, to strengthen synergies through nature-based solutions.

Give support to initiatives that boost regional nature-based climate actions. Regional Climate Weeks can play a key role. The Marrakech Partnership can catalyze and strengthen actions for climate mitigation and adaptation in biologically rich regions, particularly in developing countries, enabling support where co-benefits can be maximized. Integrated high-resolution mapping methodologies that identify co-benefit hotspots for biodiversity and carbon storage² can guide priority setting to strengthen actions by non-Party stakeholders and support NDCs.

Strengthen adaptation and resilience capacities. Nature-based solutions can help promote scalable, replicable earth systems adaptiveness to impacts on terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems health, with co-benefits for a range of societal challenges, including climate change adaptation, food and water security, disaster risk reduction, human health and well-being. In particular, collaboration between Parties and non-Party stakeholders for adaptation to health impacts of climate change through nature-based solutions will add considerable value. The Climate Adaptation Summit in January 2021 presents an important opportunity to highlight the importance of nature-based adaptation in the Marrakech Partnership.

Further enhance transparency through tracking nature-based solutions. Data collection should track progress in terms of outputs, including environmental and social impact, and tangible impacts to local communities. Compatible tracking methodologies can unlock co-benefits and minimize trade-offs. They can help enable mutual support through sharing knowledge and experience, and efficient comparison of data and knowledge gaps. The Marrakech Partnership should convene expert communities to identify priority indicators, and tracking methodologies, and encourage aggregation design for worldwide assessments.

In its endeavour to bolster nature based climate action, the Marrakech Partnership can count on the support of the Synergies of Planetary Health Research Initiative at the Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research - in which researchers at York University, the German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), and the Institute of International Relations at the University of São Paulo, collaborate in the development of tracking methodologies to assess progress of nature-based actions.

Synergies of Planetary Health Research Initiative

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<https://dighr.yorku.ca/projects/synergies/>

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References:

¹ UN Climate Statement - Call to action for a Climate Resilient Recovery from Covid-19, 9 July, 2020

<https://unfccc.int/news/call-to-action-for-a-climate-resilient-recovery-from-covid-19>

² Soto-Navarro, C., Ravilious, C., Arnell, A., de Lamo, X., Harfoot, M., Hill, S. L. L., Wearn, O. R., Santoro, M., Bouvet, A., Mermoz, S., Le Toan, T., Xia, J., Liu, S., Yuan, W., Spawn, S. A., Gibbs, H. K., Ferrier, S., Harwood, T., Alkemade, R., ... Kapos, V. (2020). Mapping co-benefits for carbon storage and biodiversity to inform conservation policy and action. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 375(1794), 20190128.

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