

Preface

The sustainable management of ecosystems and biodiversity is vital both for economic development and human well-being. The need for more far-reaching and ambitious policies has been repeatedly called for under the Convention on Biological Diversity. More recently, the Sustainable Development Goals reiterated this imperative with dedicated goals for both marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Despite some progress, current efforts are being overwhelmed by burgeoning global claims on natural goods and services to support economic activity. Yet ecosystem services provide the irreplaceable foundations for life on Earth. Biodiversity policies need to be more ambitious. Policies devised for sectors such as agriculture and fisheries have to start from the premise that their survival depends on healthy, functioning ecosystems. Policies that undermine – like environmentally harmful subsidies – must be reformed. The policy solutions needed to underwrite biodiversity are not neither novel nor particularly complex. It is their implementation that is lagging.

This report on *The Political Economy of Biodiversity Policy Reform* examines how governments have navigated the challenges of implementing reform. It highlights the types of barriers that are encountered along the way and how they can be overcome. The report brings together insights from the relevant literature on environmental policy reform and four new country case studies. The case studies examine pesticide taxes to address agricultural pollution, agricultural subsidy reform to better target biodiversity, tradable quotas to prevent collapse of fish stocks, and the establishment of conservation trust funds to provide sustainable financing for marine protected areas.

Policies designed to promote biodiversity will always be context-dependent. Institutions, actors and motives cannot easily be generalised. But the experience of past and on-going reforms provides proof that reform is, indeed, possible. And these reforms can provide powerful lessons that can increase the prospect of success of biodiversity reforms in other countries.



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From:
The Political Economy of Biodiversity Policy Reform

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264269545-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2017), "Preface", in *The Political Economy of Biodiversity Policy Reform*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264269545-1-en>

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