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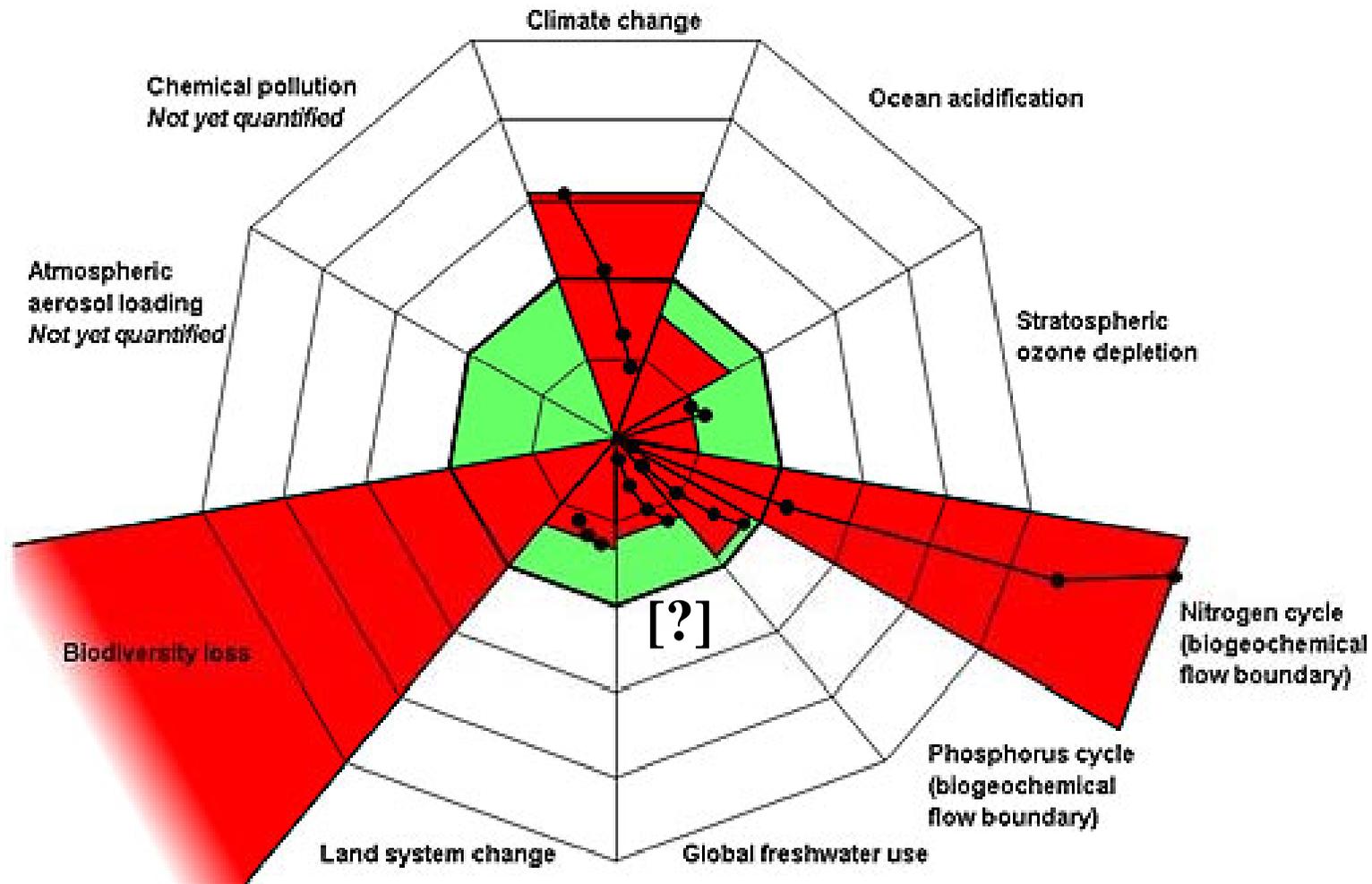
“Can’t see the water for the carbon:
The threat to rivers from climate change policies”

14th October 2010

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Planetary boundaries

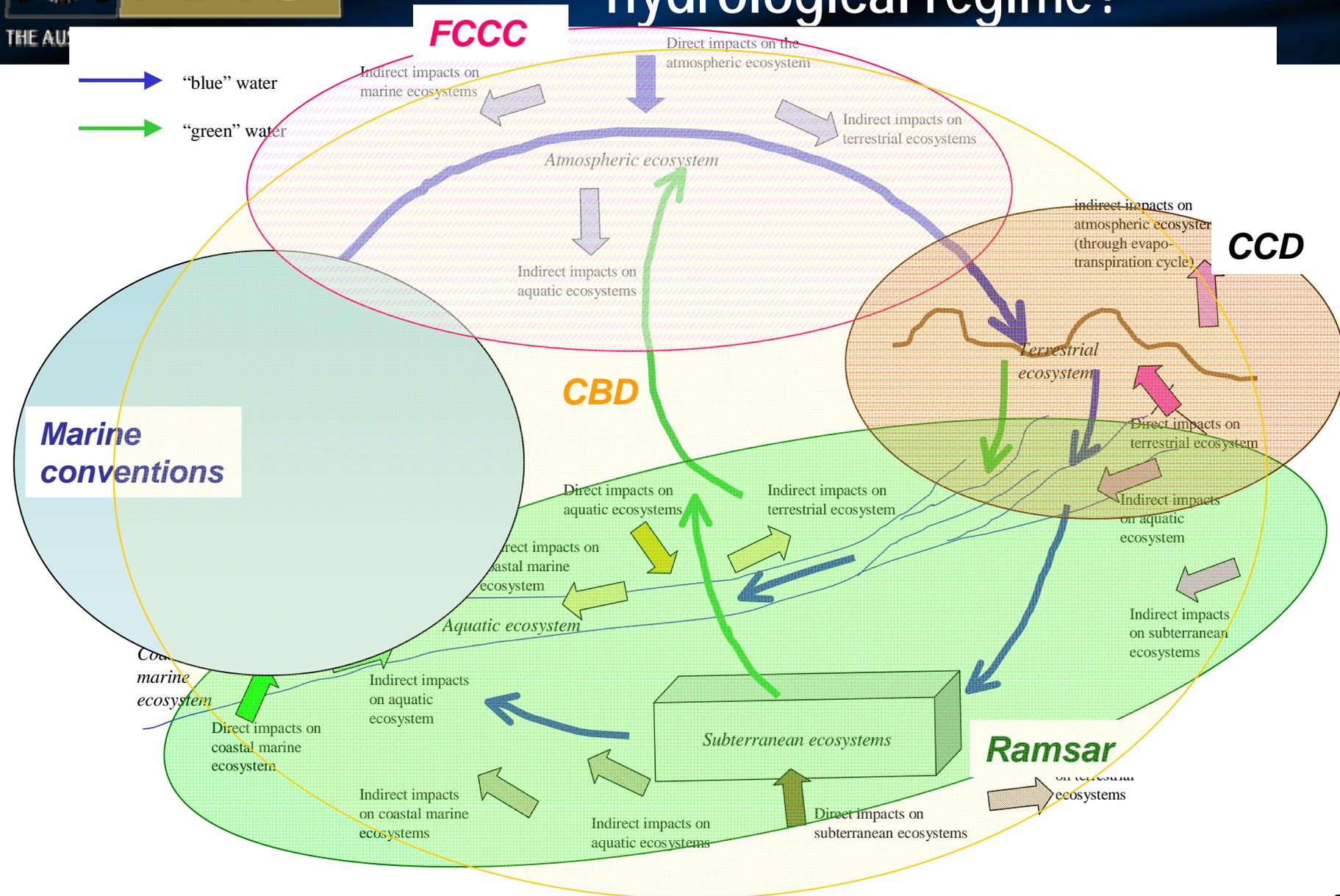


Source: Rockström et al. *Nature* 461, 472-475 (24 September 2009) | doi:10.1038/461472a



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Multilateral environmental agreements: hydrological regime?



Source: H MacKay, Ramsar STRP

Conventions

Attribute	UNFConvention on Climate Change	Convention on Biological Diversity	Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
Objective/s	Stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations "at a level that would prevent dangerous ... interference with the climate system ... within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt ... to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development ..."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The conservation of biological diversity b) Sustainable use of the components of biodiversity, c) Sharing the benefits arising from the commercial and other utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Wise use of all wetlands b) Conservation of wetlands of international importance c) International cooperation for wise use of wetlands

A common environmental imperative?

“There is a clear opportunity to implement mutually beneficial activities [between the UNFCCC and CBD] and broader national development objectives. These opportunities are rarely being realized due to a lack of national coordination among sectoral agencies [...]. In addition, there is a lack of coordination among the multilateral environmental agreements, specifically among the mitigation and adaptation activities undertaken by Parties to the UNFCCC [...], and activities to conserve and sustainably manage ecosystems undertaken by Parties to the [CBD].”

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2003)

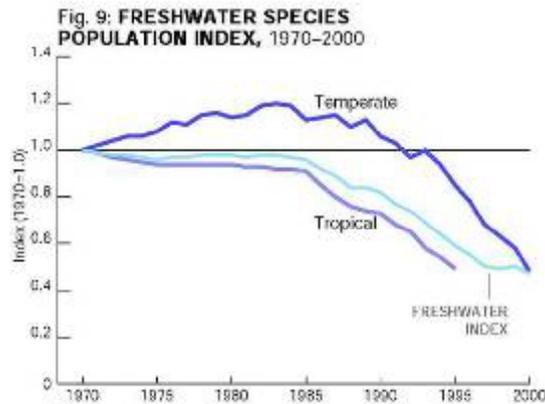


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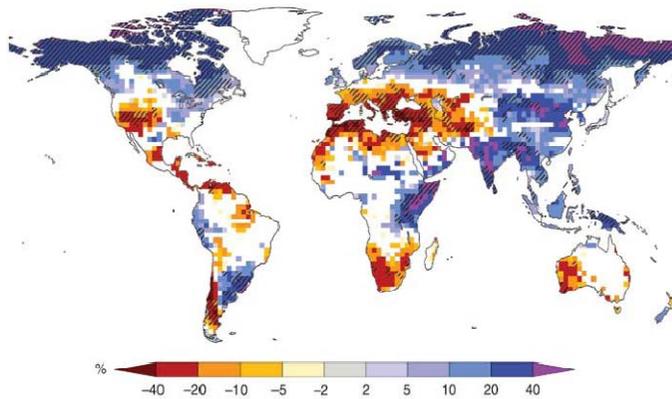
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Climate – water – biodiversity links

Source: WWF



Source: IPCC



Photos: (c) J Pittock

Freshwater ecosystems: Biodiverse. Directly threatened. Threatened by mitigation policies.

- **World Bank report supports hydropower development, integrated water resources management**

WASHINGTON, D.C., U.S. 9/1/10 (PennWell) -- A newly-released report on the World Bank Group's water strategy calls for support for hydropower in developing countries, while urging a more integrated approach to water resources management. ... Specifically, the report, endorsed by the World Bank Board's Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE), directs the Bank Group to: ...

- Scale-up support for hydropower, as the largest source of renewable and low-carbon energy, including high-risk, high-reward infrastructure projects ...

- **China to boost hydropower capacity by 50 percent by 2015**

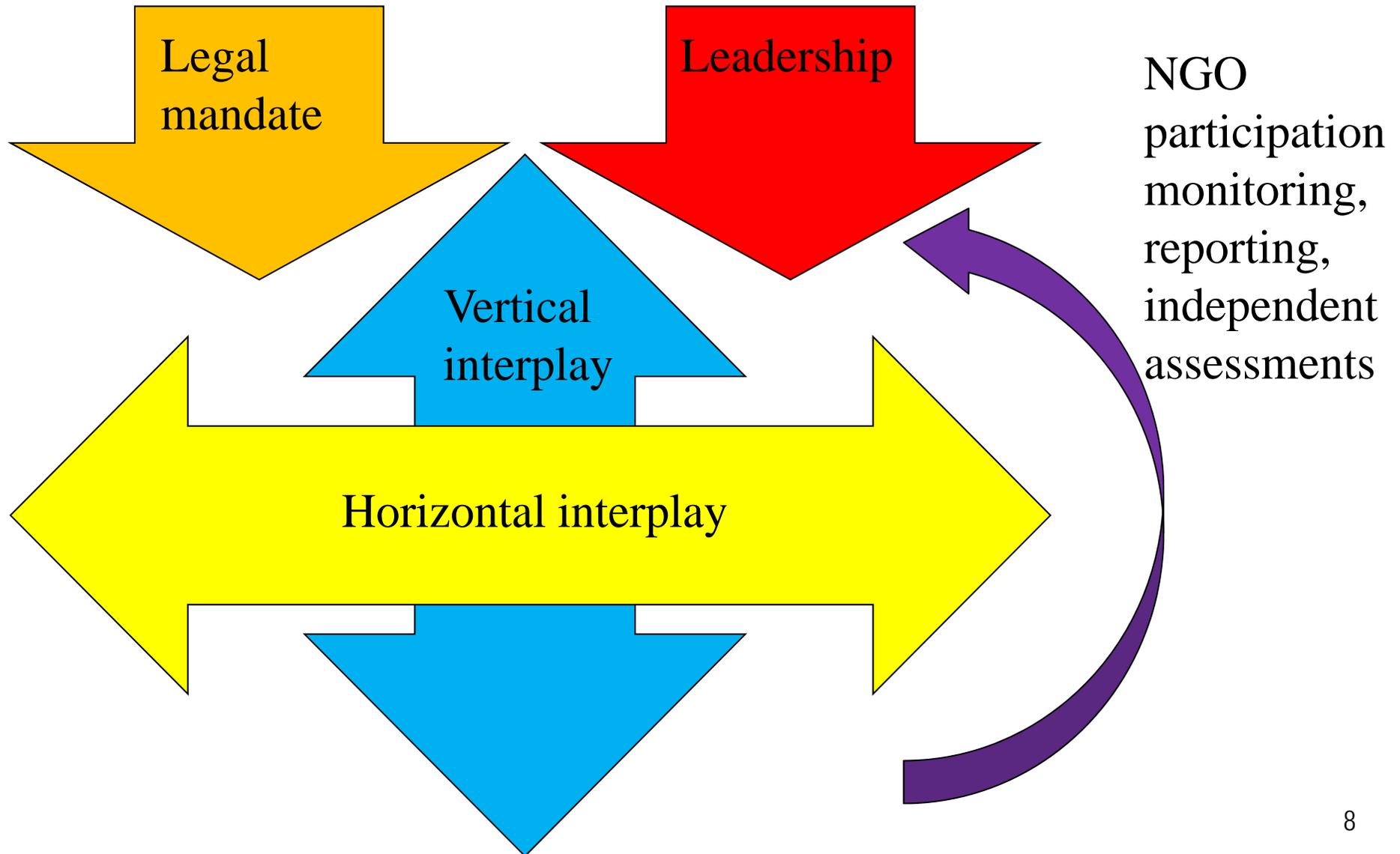
BEIJING, China 9/1/10 (PennWell) -- China plans to boost its installed hydroelectric power capacity to 300 million kW by 2015 from the current 200 million in an effort to cut carbon dioxide emissions ... Government officials told media outlets that such an expansion is needed for China's goal to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions per unit of gross domestic product (GDP) by 40 to 45 percent by 2020. China promised at the Copenhagen Conference on global climate change last year that it would generate 15 percent of its power from non-fossil sources by 2020, up from the current 7.8 percent. ...



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Integrative and interplay elements



CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan. Ramsar designated from 1996 “as the CBD's lead implementation partner on wetland issues”, eg.

Ramsar (2008): Resolution X.24 Climate change and

wetlands: “22. WELCOMING the fact that ... the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Decision IX/16 invited the ... Ramsar Convention ... to consider appropriate action in relation to wetlands, water, biodiversity and climate change in view of the importance of this subject for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and human welfare, in line with the lead implementation role of the Ramsar Convention for CBD for wetlands and the terms of the fourth CBD/Ramsar Joint Work Plan; invited the Ramsar STRP to further assess the contribution of biodiversity to climate change mitigation and adaptation in peatlands and other wetlands; recognized the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity of wetlands and in particular peatlands in addressing climate change ...”



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Horizontal interplay – the bad & the ugly

The bad: Rio conventions' Joint Liaison Group (2001-).

- Reducing deforestation and adaptation to climate change identified as “main areas for future collaboration” in 2007
- Insubstantial compared to the potential for greater positive synergies between conventions.

The ugly: Kyoto's Clean Development Mechanism subsidies for hydropower: registration sought for 828 projects (2008). Checks? Additionality?

Vertical interplay - examples

Attribute	UNFConvention on Climate Change	Convention on Biological Diversity	Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
National plans & strategies	Art 4.1(b) & Art 4.1(f) for national climate change plans plus integration into other instruments.	Article 6 requires development or adaption of national climate change plans plus integration into other instruments.	Article 3.1 and subsequent resolutions require national climate change plans plus integration into other instruments.
National reporting	Five 'National communications' from 1994-2010. Since 1996, & Annex I annual emission inventories. Opaque syntheses.	Four national reports were required between 1998 and 2009. Opaque syntheses.	Since 1984, 3 yearly national reporting. Secretariat 'name, praise and shame' reports to the COP.

“Name, praise and shame”

Eg. Ramsar 2008:

- Agenda item XI. Ramsar COP10 DOC. 6. Report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the Convention at the global level.
- Resolution X.13: The Status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. Gland, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.



Psyche Lagoon, VIC. © J Pittock.

Ramsar's five international organization partners:



"Trustee" roles:

- Implementers
- Technical knowledge
- Advocates
- Watchdogs

Adopted initiatives:

- Small grants fund
- Montreux Record
- Resolutions on issues like climate change



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Why is the UNFCCC regime aloof?

- Ignorance?
- Climate change considered more important?
- Lack of agreement on climate policies induces introspection?
- Larger institutional management task (transaction costs) preclude external engagement?
- Lack of support from UNFCCC member states for integration?
- Clunky IPCC integration for technical advice?
- Economic importance of the UNFCCC – “high politics” (Young 2002) – precludes delegation?

Possible solutions – not mutually exclusive

- Action at more local scales? Minilateralism?
- Clustering and other integrative mechanisms (eg. Oberthur, UN agencies) but has not succeeded in the past ten years
- Overarching environmental governance reforms, eg. World Environment Organisation (Biermann; France & Brazil)
- Incentives for collaboration: not tried, cheap? (Secretariat budgets, 2004 in US M: UNFCCC \$16.7, CBD \$12.0, Ramsar \$3.9). Via GEF (US\$780M/yr)?

Conclusions:

1. The three conventions have provisions for mainstreaming policy responses
2. In practice this is not achieved – rivers are at risk
 - Horizontal integration mechanisms are tokenistic
 - Vertical integration occurs in parallel
 - States not behaving as unitary actors
3. Centralization of the UNFCCC regime is a barrier
4. Opportunities to delegate achievable interventions have been missed (eg. on forests and peatlands)
5. Reform is required, but how ambitious?