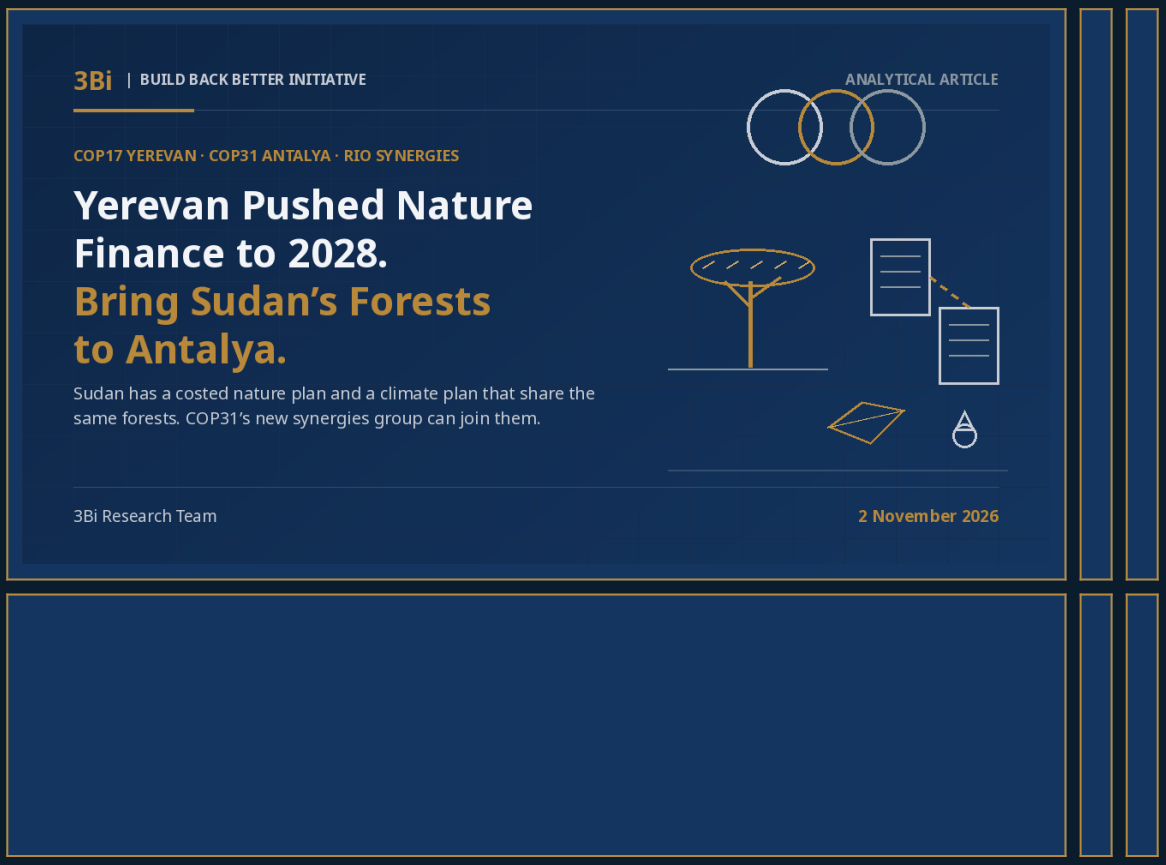
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Yerevan Pushed Nature Finance to 2028. Antalya Opens a Rio Synergies Door Next Week. Sudan Should Bring Its Forests Through It.

3Bi Research Team | Analytical Article | 2 November 2026

Research Team

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Contents

The Hook 1
The Argument 1
Why It Matters to the Reader 3
Close 3
Sourcing & Contact 4

The UN biodiversity talks in Yerevan deferred nature's new finance mechanism to 2028. COP31 will launch a Rio Synergies Group in Antalya. Sudan has a costed nature plan and a climate plan covering the same forests, and should join with one forest flagship.

The UN biodiversity conference closed in Yerevan on 31 October 2026, deferring the form of nature's post-2030 finance mechanism to COP18 in 2028. COP31 in Antalya, opening on 9 November, will launch a Rio Synergies Group for Action. (Illustration: 3Bi)

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The Hook

The UN biodiversity conference in Yerevan closed on 31 October after an all-night final plenary. Countries adopted nearly 50 decisions and a "Yerevan Pathway" in response to the first global review of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which found the world off track on its 23 nature targets for 2030 (Convention on Biological Diversity, 31 October 2026). On money, the outcome was thin. Developed countries missed their commitment to provide at least $20 billion a year for nature by 2025. The conference agreed that a financial mechanism for nature will exist after 2030, but deferred the decision on what form it takes, a new fund or existing arrangements, to COP18 in Quito in 2028. The Cali Fund, created two years ago to collect payments from companies that use genetic data, ended the conference with pledges of $10,565 (Carbon Brief, 31 October 2026).

Countries also failed to agree on how the three Rio conventions, on biodiversity, climate and desertification, should work together, and postponed that decision to COP18 as well (IISD, 31 October 2026). But the presidencies of the three conventions, including Türkiye as COP31 host, issued a joint declaration on synergies in Yerevan. And COP31, which opens in Antalya on 9 November, has made synergies a dedicated Action Agenda theme on 17 November, the first time since COP28 in Dubai (IISD, 31 October 2026).

Our argument is that Sudan should not wait for Quito. The country already has what the COP31 Presidency is asking for: a costed nature plan, a climate plan, and forests that sit in both. Next week in Antalya it can put them together.

The Argument

First, Sudan has done its biodiversity homework, and priced it. Sudan's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for 2025–2030, prepared by the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR), is aligned with the global framework and recorded as final on

the CBD's reporting platform, with an adoption date of 31 October 2025 (CBD Online Reporting Tool, Sudan NBSAP record). It sets four national goals and 23 national targets, and puts a price on 304 actions: US$409.5 million in total, plus US$2.4 million for monitoring. Wildlife (US$120.6 million) and forests (US$74.4 million) are the largest lines (Sudan NBSAP 2025–2030, HCENR, 2025). That is not a common achievement. By the time the UN's global report was compiled for Yerevan, only 45% of countries had published their new NBSAPs in time to be considered (Carbon Brief, 31 October 2026). This piece is not about Sudan being absent. Sudan is ahead of more than half the world on paper.

Second, the plan barely speaks to climate finance, and the climate plan does not mention it. Of the NBSAP's US$409.5 million, only US$3.56 million, less than 1%, sits under its "climate change impacts on biodiversity" component. One of those actions, budgeted at US$60,000, is to bring elements of the National Adaptation Plan into forestry, rangeland, coastal and wetland policies by 2028 (Sudan NBSAP 2025–2030, section 8.2.10 and Table 10.2). Yet the same forests carry Sudan's climate pledge. Sudan's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commits to restoring and sustainably managing degraded forest reserves and the gum arabic belt, afforesting degraded land in rainfed and irrigated areas, and restoring mangroves in Red Sea State. Together that covers 1.7 million hectares and is costed at US$120 million, for an estimated 8.2 million tonnes of avoided emissions in 2030 (Sudan, Updated First NDC, October 2021). A text search by 3Bi found no reference to the NDC in the NBSAP, and none to the NBSAP in the NDC. The 2021 NDC predates the new plan, so this is not a failure of either document. But it means that Sudan has two price tags, prepared by two processes, for overlapping work on the same land.

Third, COP31 is building a channel for exactly this. The COP31 Presidency's concept note describes a "Rio Synergies Group for Action", to be formally launched in Antalya. It is voluntary and country-led, and it does not create new commitments or reporting duties. Its stated purpose is to connect existing national priorities in NDCs, National Adaptation Plans, NBSAPs and land-degradation targets with "expertise, partnerships, implementation support, and finance". To join, a country names a national contact person and brings at least one "nationally determined flagship action". The note's own examples include integrated landscape restoration, ecosystem-based adaptation and investment-ready initiatives that pay off across all three agendas. The launch is meant to showcase those flagship actions and gather support offers from organisations (COP31 Presidency, "Rio Synergies" concept note, accessed 2 November 2026). The note also cites evidence that coordinated restoration across the conventions costs less than fragmented approaches, with estimated savings of US$45.6 million a year in Rwanda (COP31 Presidency concept note, citing the Economics of Land Degradation Initiative).

Sudan also has a working model to point to. Its NDC describes the White Nile State ecosystem-based adaptation project, supported by the GEF and UNEP, which combines rangeland regeneration, afforestation, rainwater harvesting and drought-tolerant farming, and is meant to carry those approaches into policy and budgets (Sudan, Updated First NDC, October 2021). That is a synergies project in all but name.

Why It Matters to the Reader

The fair objection is that a voluntary group with no fund attached is one more platform, and that Sudan's environmental institutions are stretched thin. That is a reasonable concern, and 3Bi is not claiming the group will bring money on day one. The concept note says plainly that partner contributions "remain subject to available resources". Our narrower point is about cost and timing. Joining requires a contact person and a short description of an action that Sudan has already planned and costed twice. It requires no new strategy. And the alternative is to wait until 2028 for the biodiversity convention to decide what its post-2030 fund looks like, while the climate track, where adaptation and forest finance is actually being negotiated, moves on without Sudan's nature plan in view.

There is also a credibility gain. Sudan's NBSAP says it needs funding mobilisation mechanisms and project proposals to buffer climate impacts on biodiversity, budgeted at US$100,000 for 2025–2027 (Sudan NBSAP 2025–2030, section 8.2.10). A flagship action registered at COP31 would be the first visible output of that line.

If you work at HCENR, which led the NBSAP and hosts Sudan's climate change directorate, or in the Forests National Corporation or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, three low-cost steps follow.

First, before COP31 opens on 9 November, tell the COP31 Presidency that Sudan wishes to join the Rio Synergies Group for Action, and name one national contact person at HCENR.

Second, register one flagship action that merges what the two plans already say about forests: restoration of degraded forest reserves and the gum arabic belt, drawing on NDC forestry measure 10 (US$120 million) and the NBSAP's forest biodiversity actions (US$74.4 million), with the White Nile ecosystem-based adaptation project as the reference model. Use the existing figures and do not invent a new costing. The point is to show one investment that delivers on all three conventions.

Third, use the 17 November synergies day in Antalya to present that action, and ask the organisations behind the group for help preparing a single investment-ready proposal from it. That would also deliver the NBSAP's own project-proposal action ahead of its 2027 deadline.

Close

Yerevan showed that waiting for nature's money to arrive through the biodiversity convention means waiting until 2028 at least. Antalya offers a quicker route, built on plans countries already have. Sudan is one of the countries that has done the planning. It should not let a costed nature plan sit on a shelf while the climate talks it overlaps with take place next week. We will follow up after COP31 with the list of countries that joined the Rio Synergies Group for Action at its launch, and whether Sudan is among them.

Sourcing & Contact

Primary sources: Convention on Biological Diversity, “UN Biodiversity Conference charts Yerevan Pathway to accelerate global action for nature” (press release), 31 October 2026; Carbon Brief, “COP17: Key outcomes agreed at the UN biodiversity conference in Yerevan”, 31 October 2026; IISD, “COP 17 Reaches Deal on Global Biodiversity Goals as Harmful Incentives Take Centre Stage”, 31 October 2026; COP31 Presidency of Türkiye, “Rio Synergies” concept note (COP31 Action Agenda), accessed 2 November 2026; Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources, “Sudan’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030”, 2025, and its CBD Online Reporting Tool record (adoption date 31 October 2025), accessed 2 November 2026; Republic of the Sudan, Updated First Nationally Determined Contribution, October 2021; UNFCCC, “UN Climate Change Conference - Antalya, November 2026” (COP31 dates). For methodology questions or to propose a correction, contact 3Bi’s Research Team via 3bisudan.org.

3Bi Research Team. This piece was produced through 3Bi’s automated daily publications workflow, which monitors regional and international climate and energy reporting.

This publication is produced with support from 3Bi’s institutional donors; see the full funder list at 3bisudan.org.

Suggested citation: 3Bi Research Team, "Analytical Article," 2 November 2026, Build Back Better Initiative (3Bi), 3bisudan.org
Publisher: Build Back Better Initiative (3Bi)