



Voluntary Business Contributions to the CBD for 2020 and beyond

Support document from the Global Partnership on Business and Biodiversity

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1. Rationale and vision for the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity

The Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity is comprised of 21 national and regional initiatives working towards greater business engagement on biodiversity-related issues. The Global Partnership is thus a network of networks linking the various initiatives so that they can share information, good practices, and cooperate on common projects with a view to mainstreaming biodiversity concerns into businesses. The makeup of [national or regional initiatives](#) is different; however, they all connect businesses, governments and other key stakeholders in encouraging information sharing and the facilitation of greater understanding and action on biodiversity conservation by businesses at the national and regional levels. The objective of these efforts, taken in conjunction with those of partner organizations, is to significantly reduce the negative impacts of business on biodiversity (or even achieve net-positive impacts) and to mobilize/enable companies to act as positive influencers upon other entities throughout the economy.¹

Based on this, the primary functions of the GBPP are:

- To build a network of networks on B&B; (internal - promote cooperation exchange lessons among its members, expand knowledge, serve as a coordinated and collaborative entity representing business and biodiversity worldwide).
- To push for greater business contributions towards global biodiversity targets (i.e. - forthcoming post-2020 framework and subsequent implementation).

¹ URL: <https://www.cbd.int/business/gp.shtml>



- To involve business in general, stimulate commitments towards the CBD, inform members and wider business community of the need to take action and hopefully, promote transformation.

There is a unique window of opportunity in 2019-2020, to engage the business community in the participatory process set by CBD for the preparation of the post-2020 framework². In this regard, there are several entry points for business participation:

- Concrete commitments to the Action Agenda for Nature and People;
- Open-Ended Working Group meetings for the post-2020 framework;
- Regional consultations;
- Informal Advisory Group on mainstreaming;
- Contribution to the several different documents drafted by CBD.

The GPBB has an important role as catalyst and focus on ambitions, commitments and needs from the business community – the post-2020 framework mainstreaming approach would also evolve from those concrete commitments.

The GPBB can act as facilitator, a catalyst and coordinator of a call for commitments from the business sector. The aim is a clear, comprehensive view of mainstreaming biodiversity action by State and non-state actors, to recognize commitments and inspire still greater ambition, for the good of current and future generations. This would contribute to the "[Sharm-el-Sheik to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People](#)" and the call for a new deal for nature³ feeding where

² URL: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-34-en.pdf>.

³ URL: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/01/in-2020-we-need-a-new-deal-for-nature/>.



possible in the different participatory mechanisms established. Ongoing discussions for the post-2020 call for this integrative and participatory approach and GPBB can bring a relevant added value with a potential unified voice from business.



2. Biodiversity target or commitment setting from a business perspective

There are various guidance and frameworks on how to put together a meaningful sustainability strategy covering a wide variety of issues (e.g. from human rights to climate change)⁴, including voluntary targets (i.e. voluntary commitments or contributions to society: e.g. UN Global Compact⁵ and Sustainable Development Goals⁶). For instance, the Natural Capital Protocol (2016)⁷ is a decision-making framework that enables organizations to identify, measure and value their direct and indirect impacts and dependencies on natural capital. One of its applications is natural capital target or commitment setting.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁸ are an urgent call for action which recognize the intersectionality of human rights, whether that is health, education or climate action. Related to biodiversity, SDG 14, life below water, aims to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development while SDG 15, life on land, aims to protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. While the SDGs might be difficult to measure or grasp, some companies have made progress in their commitments and have taken it upon themselves to prioritize these goals in their productions.

⁴ Many resources are available on this topic: e.g., https://digital.library.nyerson.ca/islandora/object/RULA%3A6440/datastream/OBJ/download/A_comparative_analysis_of_public_and_private_sector_sustainability_reporting_of_goals_and_targets.pdf ; <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:395957/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

⁵ URL: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/>. A call to companies to align strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and take actions that advance societal goals.

⁶ URL: https://business.un.org/en/forms/commitment_form?climatechange=true.

⁷ URL: <https://naturalcapitalcoalition.org/natural-capital-protocol/>.

⁸ URL: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>.



Most widely-used reporting or disclosure standards / frameworks (e.g., Global Compact, CDP⁹ and GRI¹⁰) require targets or commitments to be measurable, time-bound and realistic. The SMART approach stands for:

- Specific – target a specific area for improvement;
- Measurable – quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress;
- Assignable – specify who will do it;
- Realistic – state what results can realistically be achieved, given available resources;
- Time-related – specify when the result(s) can be achieved.

In this regard, several initiatives are currently working on developing the appropriate guidance and tools to help business better measure, value and/or monitor their biodiversity impacts and/or dependences. Notably, we can mention:

- The Aligning Biodiversity Measures for Business Initiative, led by UNEP-WCMC, with support from the Boticario Group Foundation in collaboration with 21 organisations with expertise in corporate biodiversity indicators: It aims to form a common view among key stakeholders on the measurement, monitoring and disclosure of corporate biodiversity impacts/dependence for business decision-making and government policy and to push for improved corporate performance and greater reporting.
- The Natural Capital Coalition which, in collaboration with the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI), the University of Cambridge and leading

⁹ URL: <https://www.cdp.net/en>. CDP, formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project, runs the global disclosure system that, through offices and partners in 50 countries, enables companies, cities, states and regions to measure and manage their environmental impacts. It has built the most comprehensive collection of self-reported environmental data in the world. Its network of investors and purchasers, representing over \$100 trillion, along with policy makers around the globe, use its data and insights to make better-informed decisions.

¹⁰ URL: <https://www.globalreporting.org/Pages/default.aspx>. GRI helps businesses and governments worldwide understand and communicate their impact on critical sustainability issues such as climate change, human rights, governance and social well-being. This enables real action to create social, environmental and economic benefits for everyone. The GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards are developed with true multi-stakeholder contributions and rooted in the public interest.



biodiversity-focused conservation organisations, is developing complementary guidance to strengthen the way biodiversity is covered in the Natural Capital Protocol¹¹.

- The Biological Diversity Protocol (BD Protocol), which is a comprehensive biological diversity accounting and reporting framework that can help business produce the credible and unbiased information needed for various biodiversity-related applications, from site management to disclosure¹².
- Some relevant examples of certification systems that take biodiversity and ecosystems into account include Rainforest Alliance¹³, ISO certificates¹⁴, FSC¹⁵, UEFT¹⁶, LIFE Certification¹⁷, and Fairtrade¹⁸.

¹¹ URL: <https://naturalcapitalcoalition.org/projects/biodiversity/>

¹² URL: <http://www.bdprotocol.org/bdp-protocol.php>. The Biological Diversity Protocol (BD Protocol) is an output of the Biodiversity Disclosure Project (BDP), managed by the National Biodiversity and Business Network (NBBN) of South Africa and hosted by the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT). In close collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, the BD Protocol aims to enable any organisation to identify measure, manage and report on their impacts on biodiversity in a standardised, comparable, credible and unbiased manner. While the GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard (i.e. the GHG Protocol) was the benchmark standard for the vision and structure of the BD Protocol, the BD Protocol is aligned to the Natural Capital Protocol. It helps provide biodiversity-specific guidance to measuring changes in the state of natural capital (step 6 of the Natural Capital Protocol), by providing guidance on how to measure change(s) in biodiversity components impacted by business. This consultation process is managed by the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and hosted by the Natural Capital Coalition through Collaborase (<https://collaborase.com/bdprotocol>). It will last for three months until August 15, 2019, after which all comments, questions and contributions will be collected, analysed and summarised in a stakeholder feedback report for public release. The BD Protocol will then be revised accordingly for official publication at a later date, prior the 2020 CoP of the Convention on Biological Diversity which will be hosted by China. As part of this consultation process, any commentator may request to be recognised as a co-author or contributor to the BD Protocol.

¹³ URL: <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/>. The Rainforest Alliance

¹⁴ URL: <https://www.iso.org/home.html>. The International Organization for Standardization

¹⁵ URL: <https://ca.fsc.org/en-ca>. The Forest Stewardship Council

¹⁶ URL: <https://www.ethicalbiotrader.org/>. The Union for Ethical Biotrader

¹⁷ URL: <https://institutolife.org/?lang=en>. The Lasting Initiative for Earth

¹⁸ URL: <http://www.fairtrade.ca/en-CA>. Fairtrade



3. Review of existing approaches to business contributions to CBD targets

There is corporate reporting and disclosure on biodiversity, but it is limited. As shown in the research on a Typology of Action on Business Reporting on Biodiversity¹⁹ that many companies may refer to biodiversity in their reporting through references to land use, deforestation etc., but it is not attached to any targets nor deemed a material issue worth reporting fully on (please see **table 1** below).

Similarly, Addison *et al.* (2018)²⁰, assessed the top 100 of the 2016 Fortune 500 Global companies' sustainability reports, and found that 49 of the Fortune 100 mentioned biodiversity in reports, and 31 made clear biodiversity commitments, of which only 5 were specific, measurable, and time bound. A variety of biodiversity-related activities were mentioned (e.g., managing impacts, restoring biodiversity, and investing in biodiversity), but only 9 companies provided quantitative indicators to verify the magnitude of their activities (e.g., area of habitat restored). However, there is little evidence of any mention of voluntary contributions to any specific CBD Aichi target.

Some cross-sector initiatives, which attempt to make the link between business and CBD targets, have been identified to date:

- The Cancun Business and Biodiversity Pledge²¹ (Mexico, December 2016) constitutes a high-level, aspirational declaration with no SMART22 target or indicator. It has over 140 signatories;

¹⁹ URL: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/ff6d/906c/ebebc273f27f8e9416bba00b/sbi-02-04-add2-en.pdf>

²⁰ Prue Addison, Joseph Bull, Eleanor J Milner-Gulland (2018). Using conservation science to advance corporate biodiversity accountability. *Conservation Biology*, DOI: 10.1111/cobi.13190

²¹ URL: <https://www.cbd.int/action-agenda/contributions/action?action-id=5d262bc8606ad900018e8693>



- There are 8 national pledges: Canada, France, Germany, India Japan, Korea, Spain and Sri Lanka that come from the Global Partnership;
- The *Act for nature*²³ initiative (2018, France) which list voluntary biodiversity commitments of about 40 companies, with a wide-ranging set of targets (i.e., from mere commitment to develop a biodiversity policy or indicator to more comprehensive SMART targets which could be linked to some Aichi Targets); though only two company mention Aichi targets within their own commitments.

Key findings:

- Very limited voluntary business contributions to CBD targets have been made public to date;
- No real business understanding on how to frame CBD-relevant targets/contributions;
- Available voluntary biodiversity contributions rarely follow best practice (i.e. SMART indicators) for target setting.

²³ URL: <http://www.act4nature.com/?lang=en>



Table 1: Revised Typology of Actions for Reporting on Biodiversity ²⁴

THEME	MAIN TOPICS	AICHI TARGETS	GRI INDICATORS
Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity appear as a material issue Existence of a biodiversity policy statement Management approach to biodiversity reported on Reports include a CEO letter which specifically refers to biodiversity 	Strategic Goal "A" and Strategic Goal "E"	GRI 103 Management Disclosure
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action taken to address biodiversity impacts, risks and opportunities Specific examples of engaging with stakeholders e.g. suppliers Partnerships with NGOs and other organizations on biodiversity related projects Funding specific biodiversity related projects 	Strategic Goal "A" Strategic Goal "B" Strategic Goal "C" Strategic Goal "D" And Strategic Goal "E"	304-3 ²⁵
Measuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying risks and opportunities Using tools and other means to measure both positive and negative impacts Reporting on biodiversity specific indicators such as GRI All operations with significant impact taken into account in measurements 	Strategic Goal "A" Strategic Goal "B" Strategic Goal "C" Strategic Goal "D" And Strategic Goal "E"	304-1 ²⁶ 304-2 ²⁷ 304-3 304-4 ²⁸

²⁴ URL: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/ff6d/906c/ebecb273f27f8e9416bba00b/sbi-02-04-add2-en.pdf>

²⁵ GRI 304-3 Habitats protected or restored.

²⁶ GRI 304-1 Operational sites owned, leased, managed in, or adjacent to, protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value outside protected areas.

²⁷ GRI 304-2 Significant impacts of activities, products, and services on biodiversity.

²⁸ GRI 304-4 IUCN Red List species and national conservation list species with habitats in areas affected by operations.



4. Supporting the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People

[NAZCA](#) – The Global Climate Action portal could be a source of inspiration for building a platform which would receive, store and potentially monitor voluntary business contributions. NAZCA is an online platform where non-Party stakeholders from around the globe - companies, cities, subnational regions, investors and civil society organizations - can display their commitments to act on climate change. By displaying their ambition and commitments, non-Party stakeholders lent momentum to the negotiations that produced the Paris Climate Change Agreement in December 2015. At the UN Climate Conferences in Marrakesh in 2016 and Bonn in 2017, countries restated their understanding that success on climate change will require still greater ambition on the part of non-state actors. Therefore, the portal's role as a tracking and reporting tool - one that recognizes existing action and attracts new commitments - was revamped in September 2018 with the aim of making the it more comprehensive and easier to use.

The GPBB supports the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People

Businesses call for unified and standardised biodiversity criteria for target setting and action. When possible, attempts should be made to reinforce biodiversity targets within existing management or reporting schemes. The GPBB thus calls for voluntary business contributions or commitments to support the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People²⁹, which aims to collect, coordinate and celebrate actions in support of biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use.

²⁹ URL: <https://www.cbd.int/action-agenda/>



Launched by the Governments of Egypt and China, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the agenda seeks to mobilize action in the lead up to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) in 2020. It aims to enhance implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, advance on the Sustainable Development Goals and support the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, for adoption at COP15 in China. It also highlights actions and initiatives to “bend the curve of loss on biodiversity” and advance the CBD’s vision of Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050.

The Action Agenda has three main objectives: to raise public awareness about the urgent need to stem biodiversity loss and restore areas that may have suffered from human impact, to benefit the health of all living species, including humanity, and rebalance our global ecological system; to inspire and implement nature-based solutions to meet key global challenges; and to catalyse cooperative initiatives in support of global biodiversity goals.

The online platform will receive and showcase commitments and contributions to biodiversity from stakeholders across all sectors. It will enable the mapping of biodiversity efforts around the world, estimate impact and help to identify key gaps.

To support the Action Agenda, the GPBB calls for businesses to:

- Re-affirm previous commitments, and, when appropriate, make new ones which are credible and support best practice (i.e. avoid being branded as “green washing”), which means promoting the adoption of SMART targets;
- Frame their SMART commitments by attempting to answer the key questions listed in **Table 2**, below.
- Frame commitments according to the following [CBD targets](#):



- Strategic Goal A: Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society;
- Strategic Goal B: Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use;
- Strategic Goal C: To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity;
- Strategic Goal D: Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- Strategic Goal E: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building;

Examples of corporate biodiversity contributions for the Action Agenda for Nature and People are illustrated in **Table 3**, below.

- Enable companies to frame their contributions according to the SDGs, especially by segregating commitments for SDG 14 (life below water)³⁰ and SDG 15 (life on lands)³¹.

³⁰ URL: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-14-life-below-water.html>

³¹ URL: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-15-life-on-land.html>



Table 2: Key questions for mainstreaming biodiversity into business

KEY QUESTIONS

1. What is the biodiversity policy of your company?
2. How is your biodiversity policy implemented throughout your company (i.e. management, supply chain, etc.)? Do you provide a guide or a timeframe with realistic goals that can be achieved?
3. What are the dependencies and impacts of your company on biodiversity and/or natural capital? What is the scale of your company's biodiversity dependencies and impacts?
4. What is the value of the company's biodiversity dependencies and impacts? Which are the most meaningful to your company?
5. How do you measure your company's biodiversity dependencies and impacts (i.e. Natural Capital Protocol³², SEEA³³, etc.)?
6. What are the company's biodiversity strategy, targets, and associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)?
7. Are your company's biodiversity strategy, targets and associated KPIs supported by science-based research?
8. What are the company's biodiversity action plans (scope, type of activities)?
9. Are your company's biodiversity action plans supported by science-based research/data?
10. What are your company's biodiversity monitoring systems (you may consider those mentioned in Section 2 of this document)?
11. What is the scope of your company's biodiversity exposure (risks, impacts, dependencies, performance)?
12. What is your company's specific pledge to the CBD Action Agenda for Nature and People (i.e. concrete and measurable actions towards October 2020, with implications for the post-2020 framework)?

³² URL: <https://naturalcapitalcoalition.org/natural-capital-protocol/>

³³ URL: <https://seea.un.org/> The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting



Table 3: Example of corporate biodiversity contributions for the Action Agenda

STRATEGIC GOALS	WHAT IS YOUR CORPORATE POLICY?	WHAT ARE YOUR 2020 AND POST-2020 TARGETS?
STRATEGIC GOAL A		
Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society	Biodiversity recognised as critical for the company -> it generates both significant opportunities and risks	Value of biodiversity to my business (direct operations) assessed by 2020. Value of biodiversity to my business's value chain and key stakeholders (i.e. suppliers, clients, local communities) assessed by 2022.
STRATEGIC GOAL B		
Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use	To become a biodiversity neutral company in the short-term, towards becoming biodiversity positive in the medium- to long-term	Biodiversity footprint of my business (direct operations) assessed by 2020. Biodiversity footprint of my business's value chain assessed by 2022. No net loss target for direct operations adopted by 2020 and implemented by 2022.
STRATEGIC GOAL C		
To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity	To sustainably manage biodiversity assets under the company's direct responsibility	All areas under the company's direct control have a biodiversity management plan and site-specific targets by 2020.
STRATEGIC GOAL D		
Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services	To sustainably manage ecosystem services delivery to key stakeholders, especially disadvantaged communities, from areas under the company's direct responsibility	All areas with significant ecosystem services and under the company's direct control have a biodiversity management plan and site-specific targets for shared-value creation by 2020.
STRATEGIC GOAL E		
Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building	To collaborate with stakeholders throughout the value chain to implement the impact mitigation hierarchy, share data and learnings and invest in human capital	Partnership agreements throughout the value chain by 2020. X% increase in shared value created through joint activities by 2020.



5. The key role of Governments in providing effective regulatory frameworks and encouraging voluntary private sector participation

In recognition of the key role played by governments in establishing favorable conditions for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity, and in particular for voluntary action and mainstreaming of good practices by businesses and the private sector, the GPBB calls for Parties to:

- Ensure a regulatory and legal environment which:
 - Eliminates subsidies and other mechanisms which promote private or public sector activities that are harmful to the environment and especially to biodiversity (with net negative impact);
 - Creates a level playing field so that all businesses are required to conduct their business in a way that reflects a legal duty and responsibility regarding biodiversity and the environment;
 - Ensures effective implementation and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations, including in public contracting and procurement.
 - Provides for effective monitoring and enforcement of the marine and terrestrial protected area status;
 - Provides incentives and recognition for business engagement going beyond the law, including by providing positive incentives to businesses which demonstrate net positive impacts on biodiversity at a national level and/or across their supply chains.
- Encourage voluntary efforts of businesses to contribute to the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity:
 - Initiate and promote activities that increase the level of knowledge and commitment of society as a whole, and business in particular, regarding



the value of biodiversity and the danger inherent in the ongoing loss of biodiversity.

- Promote the development of private-public alliances (including businesses, communities and other stakeholders) to provide effective solutions.

There is an undeniable need for engagement of the private sector with the biodiversity agenda. Businesses depend greatly on nature and ecosystem services and the concrete efforts that are made into changing the Business as Usual can have a great positive impact for economic activities and human well being.

No matter how big or small, we all play a part in the road to achieving a sustainable future and it ultimately depends on everyone doing their part.