

**Frankfurt Zoological Society**  
**African Parks Network**  
**Wildlife Conservation Society**  
**Submission to the Convention on Biological Diversity**  
**Views on Scope and Content of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**  
**April 15, 2019**

## **Background**

As the planet faces an unprecedented biodiversity crisis, it is imperative that solutions are developed on a scale commensurate with the challenge. The crisis cannot be averted through a series of short-term, disjointed, and underfunded projects. Scientists have begun coalescing around a larger, long-term vision of well-managed protected areas that can maintain the incredible variety of life on Earth. This vision will require long-term commitments and a creative approach to financing conservation.

As the Convention on Biological Diversity develops its post-2020 framework for biodiversity, it should include new and innovative financing and conservation strategies that will lead to better-managed and more effective protective areas. The Frankfurt Zoological Society has developed one such new approach, called Legacy Landscapes, and it has now partnered with African Parks Network and the Wildlife Conservation Society for implementation. The approach transcends any single organization, putting globally important protected areas at its center. We describe Legacy Landscapes in more detail below.

## **The Importance of Protected Areas**

While a number of factors contribute to the biodiversity crisis, habitat loss is the leading cause. As governments and NGOs across the globe work to confront the biodiversity crisis, among the most important tools at their disposal is the designation and management of parks and protected areas.

The CBD states that “protected areas are the cornerstone of biological diversity conservation.” The Global Environment Facility (the “GEF”) also recognizes the importance of protected areas in its [2018 GEF-7 Biodiversity Strategy](#):

*“GEF support to the establishment and management of protected area systems and associated buffer zones and biological corridors has arguably been one of GEF’s greatest achievement during the last 25 years.”*

We believe the world needs to expand and improve the management of protected areas. We endorse the goal of protecting at least 30% of the planet by 2030 in the CBD’s post-2020 strategy plan, as advocated by the scientific community, the [Campaign for Nature](#) and [many others](#), as long as existing and new protected areas are effectively managed. Ensuring the

effective safeguarding of protected areas requires more and consistent funding, coupled with new management mechanisms, which is the core focus of the Legacy Landscapes approach described below.

### **Resource Mobilization for the Post-2020 Strategic Plan**

We were pleased to see language approved at COP14 in Sharm el-Sheikh to establish a high-level panel to review costs and benefits of various post-2020 scenarios and to contribute a draft resource mobilization component of the post-2020 biodiversity framework. Given how critical resource mobilization will be to achieving the convention's goals and the ultimate vision of living in harmony with nature, we strongly support this proposal and encourage the Secretariat of CBD and all of the Parties to ensure that this work is able to move forward.

Additionally, there is a good amount of research currently underway that we hope the proposed panel will consider and use to inform its recommendations. This includes a study commissioned by the [Campaign for Nature](#) and National Geographic Society that will quantify the costs of 30% protection, the gap between those costs and what is currently being spent, and the benefits of protection relative to the costs.

Once the cost to meet the world's conservation goals is established, perhaps the greatest challenge will be to secure the necessary funding. We are working with private philanthropists, donor countries, local governments, corporations and others to help generate new resources, but we strongly encourage Parties to the CBD - particularly from developed countries - to increase government funding streams to support the work that is needed to effectively respond to the severity of the biodiversity crisis.

Lastly, the question then becomes how that funding is most effectively spent. At COP15 and as part of the post-2020 framework, we strongly encourage the Parties to endorse a suite of financial approaches and management mechanisms that could be further developed or scaled to help advance on-the-ground projects to safeguard biodiversity. The following sections in this document will describe approaches specifically geared toward ensuring the effective management of protected areas, and we offer a suggestion for one new model - Legacy Landscapes - to be considered among the many tools that are ultimately endorsed as key to implementing the CBD's new post-2020 strategy.

### **Why Do We Need a New Approach?**

Currently, the vast majority of parks and protected areas lack the capacity for effective management and monitoring, which jeopardizes their mission of safeguarding biodiversity. Many areas are facing serious threats including illegal logging, mining, invasive species, poaching, and encroaching development.

A number of factors contribute to the degradation of existing protected areas, including government capacity and national support for conservation, but the most immediate challenge is a widespread lack of financial resources. This is especially true in developing countries where much of the world's biodiversity is found. Furthermore, available funding is typically short-term

and project-based, leading to “boom and bust” cycles where conservation progress is made and subsequently lost at the project’s conclusion.

Research suggests that the world spends approximately \$9.5 billion per year on protected areas. Of this, only 13%, or \$1.3 billion, is spent on protected areas in developing countries, with 87% (\$8.2 billion) spent in developed countries. We anticipate that the forthcoming study commissioned by the [Campaign for Nature](#) will conclude that funding for protected areas needs to increase dramatically from current levels if the world is to meet its protected area goals.

Compounding these challenges, protected areas are now expected to do more, including providing a wide variety of economic and social benefits to local communities, often without additional funds to meet these new demands. Furthermore, there has been a focus on expanding the number of protected areas without the substantial increase in resources required for their management. In recognition of the need for more long-term conservation funding, a number of new financial approaches have emerged, including an increasingly diverse array of conservation trust funds. However, none are currently capitalized at a sufficient level to close large funding gaps, and there is limited information about whether and how these and other mechanisms are improving conservation outcomes. To date, no single approach has emerged that successfully addresses the protected area funding shortfall at scale.

The GEF, as the financial mechanism for the CBD, is an important source of funding for protected areas but its budget is limited and not nearly sufficient to address the world’s conservation goals. The current four-year GEF budget stands at \$4.1 billion, of which \$1.3 billion is allocated to biodiversity. That represents only \$325 million annually to be shared among close to 150 countries. The GEF recognizes the need for new financing strategies in its [2018 GEF-7 Biodiversity Strategy](#), stating:

*"GEF has been investing in improving financial sustainability of protected area systems for the past decade, but system-wide funding gaps remain at the national level in many GEF-eligible countries that have received GEF support. Restricted government budgets in many countries have reduced the financial support for protected area management and many are chronically underfunded and understaffed. Thus, **new financing strategies for protected area systems are critical to reduce existing funding gaps and improve management.**" [emphasis added]*

### **The Legacy Landscapes Initiative**

Securing the world’s biodiversity requires bold new strategies both in terms of scope and financing. We believe a variety of funding approaches, sources and mechanisms will be necessary to achieve the world’s post-2020 goals. Our contribution to this effort is a new funding and management strategy for protected areas called Legacy Landscapes.

Legacy Landscapes seeks to obtain significant and sustained funding for a network of the world’s most important protected areas for biodiversity conservation. Its three main pillars are:

1. A **place-based** focus on individual protected areas, especially ones that have high biodiversity value, and are large, intact, ecologically representative, and resilient to climate change.
2. A **long-term** financial commitment to the management of specific protected areas.
3. **Accountability** of both NGOs and governments for measured conservation outcomes based on key performance indicators.

Notably, these pillars are in strong alignment with the priorities of the [2018 GEF-7 Biodiversity Strategy](#):

*"GEF support aims to strengthen three elements of a sustainable protected area system: 1) effective protection of ecologically viable and climate-resilient representative samples of the country's ecosystems and adequate coverage of threatened species at a sufficient scale to ensure their long term persistence; 2) sufficient and predictable financial resources available, including external funding, to support protected area management costs; and 3) sustained individual and institutional capacity to manage protected areas such that they achieve their conservation objectives."*

Specific attributes of the Legacy Landscapes approach include:

- A long-term commitment (20+ years) to the management of a specific protected area by an NGO in formal agreement with donors and host government.
- Durable and respectful partnerships among NGOs, host governments and local communities.
- A place-based focus on existing, high-biodiversity protected areas.
- Upfront coordination among donors (public and private).
- Commitment to meeting basic, recurring protected area needs.
- Professional, outcomes-driven operations based on key performance indicators.
- High efficiency and low overhead, with the overwhelming majority of the resources spent on-the-ground.

Under the Legacy Landscapes approach, globally important areas will be selected according to a set of criteria that include high biodiversity, large size (> 1,000 square kilometers) and a near to undisturbed state. Meeting the needs of a specific protected area is first and foremost, and the conservation strategy is designed from the bottom up. Key to the approach is an NGO working on the ground and in partnership with the national government, making a formal, long-term commitment to an individual protected area. In turn, the NGO receives reliable, long-term funding for the area, distributed annually if it consistently meets key performance indicators.

The Legacy Landscape approach requires a robust and durable partnership between the NGO and national conservation authorities. The model provides incentives for increased buy-in for conservation of the protected area from the host government. The NGO's long-term presence builds and maintains trust. In areas that lack adequate government capacity, a reliable and significant funding stream permits NGOs and governments to enter into binding agreements for delegated or co-management of protected areas when appropriate.

The Legacy Landscape model will identify a set of Key Performance Indicators that are applicable across protected areas (e.g. species counts, forest cover). KPIs will then be tailored to specific areas and agreed upon by donors and NGOs at the outset of the funding commitment. A key element of the Legacy Landscape model is that funding is contingent on outcomes.

While funding needs vary from location to location, there is general agreement among NGOs working on the ground that roughly \$1 million per year can be sufficient to assure baseline protection for a wide range of protected areas in developing countries, assuming some participation from host governments. There are several ways to achieve this level of annual funding for each area, including an approximately \$25 million permanent endowment, a \$15 million 20-year sinking fund, or a 20-year pledge of annual support of \$1 million (it is also possible to combine these approaches for a particular protected area). The model proposes a single closing for each Legacy Landscape area fund to provide certainty to donors that the full required amount will be funded (this method has been used successfully in the Project Finance for Permanence efforts in Costa Rica and Brazil). A major benefit of Legacy Landscapes will be its streamlined approach for funders and NGOs, and its corresponding attractiveness to private philanthropy.

We continue to develop the Legacy Landscapes model and invite other NGOs, funders (both public and private) and host governments to join this initiative.

### **Legacy Landscapes and the SDGs**

We believe it is imperative to embed the CBD's 2030 goals into the development agenda by aligning them with the Sustainable Development Goals ("SDGs"). The SDGs have been endorsed at the highest level of government and have mobilized cross-agency support at all levels and the attention and support of many in the private sector.

Protected areas and the Legacy Landscapes financing model can help achieve the SDGs. In addition to protecting life on land and life under water, widespread implementation of the Legacy Landscapes model will help to meet goals for climate, economic development (through tourism and sustainable businesses), poverty reduction, security, provision of clean water, education and healthcare.

The benefits of conservation go beyond biodiversity and Legacy Landscapes should be supported by a diverse set of funders, recognizing the direct links to mitigating against climate change, sustainable development, peace and stability.

### **Conclusion: Legacy Landscapes and the CBD**

New funding approaches and improved management of protected areas should be central to CBD's post-2020 strategy. The world must raise its level of ambition not only in funding conservation but also in ensuring that measured conservation outcomes result from this increased funding. Legacy Landscapes provides a new, effective model for funding and achieving the world's post-2020 protected area goals. The post-2020 CBD strategic plan should welcome Legacy Landscapes and other new public-private financing approaches, mechanisms and

strategies. Our goal is to work with the CBD and the Parties to formally launch Legacy Landscapes at the 2020 COP.

## **Contacts**

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