



7th Meeting of the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity

Minutes

Date and time: 23 November 2017 9:00 – 17.00

Location: Natural History Museum, France

Acronyms

EC: Executive Committee

ES: Executive Secretary of the CBD

GEF: Global Environment Facility

GP: Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity

GRI: Global Reporting Initiative

NCC: Capital Coalitions

SCBD: Secretariat of the CBD

SBSTTA: Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

SBI: Subsidiary Body on Implementation

UNCCD: The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

UNFCCC: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Action items are highlighted in bold below

Welcome

- The agenda was reviewed and accepted
- Participants introduced themselves

Update from Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): Amy Fraenkel and Tamara Richards

- Welcome from the new ES, Ms. Cristiana Pasca-Palmer, who is keen to further strengthen business engagement.
- Substantial efforts are being undertaken by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) as we are in the last three years of the Strategic Plan 2011-2020, and are preparing for the next COP and the preparatory meetings
- COP-14 (Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, December 2018) will focus on mainstreaming biodiversity in energy and mining, infrastructure and manufacturing and processing (as well as health, which has already an established track). Businesses in these sectors and their associations (e.g. IPIECA, IMM) are increasingly aware of the issue being on the agenda. The SBSTTA-21 meeting in December 2017 will have a first look at the mainstreaming topic, with emphasis on the scientific and technical aspects. SBI-2 to finalize draft recommendations thereon for consideration by COP-14.
- The importance of the linkages to the SDGs was stressed. The next UN High-Level Political Forum, to take place in New York in July 2018, will focus on SDG 15 (life on land) as well as on the SDGs on cities, sustainable consumption and production, energy, and water. This will provide opportunities to highlight the important role of ecosystems and biodiversity in achieving these other SDGs.
- The ES is also strengthening work with other conventions, such as through working with UNFCCC and UNCCD for the establishment of a Project Preparation Facility for the development of large-scale transformative projects that will support synergistic implementation of the three Rio conventions.



- 2018 is the 25th anniversary of coming into force of CBD; this provides another opportunity to reach out for more engagement
- IPBES global report on biodiversity coming out in 2019, and regional reports in 2018: they will provide a wealth of fresh information on the global importance of ecosystems and biodiversity.
- GP has an important role to play in all of these upcoming events and launches.
- The updates to the CBD website has been delayed and next newsletter will be in December (*revised to January*)
- The CBD Secretariat is also reaching out to other key platforms and partners. For instance, the ES will attend and speak at the World Economic Forum. This is a key opportunity and the GP can help with messages to business leaders.
- Subsequent discussions focused on what the GP, as a collective collaborative platform, can do to strengthen knowledge exchanges and business messaging on ecosystems and biodiversity.

Plenary: Updates and perspectives from Partnership Initiatives, Global Partnership Members

- Updates were presented by the GP members in attendance. A full report of the updates provided and the PowerPoint presentations will be made available on the CBD website and through OREE.
- Comments touched upon:

Economic case

- There is an ongoing need to make the economic case of biodiversity and ecosystems, so that businesses can fully understand the importance of identifying their dependencies of, and impacts on, biodiversity. The TEEB studies aimed to provide this -- like the Stern report did on the economic loss from climate change; with one of the TEEB studies geared specifically to businesses. (*The TEEB for business work stream is now the Natural Capital Coalition, of which the SCBD is a member and collaborating in the biodiversity working group with a view to strengthen the biodiversity guidance of the Natural Capital Protocol*).

Role of information sharing

- Sharing information is the most important thing the partnership can do.
- In particular, GP members could share their work and experiences from specific sectors. **The Netherlands will share in early 2018 a recently developed sustainability agreement for the Cement sector, containing specific ambitions and actions on natural capital.**
- The relevance of focusing on one sector or many depends on the individual initiatives. There is not one way for GP members to operate.
- The lack of availability of information in English was identified as a challenge in information exchange. It would be good if the **GP members could provide an English summary of any important work they have published and share it with others through the GP and the Secretariat.**
- **SCBD will upload the information that comes in onto the website.**

Other activities

- Idea was presented to create a work-plan for the GP by agreeing certain topics and collaborations? The new Chair will develop a questionnaire for the GP to see where there are areas of interest to work on.
- It was commented on that the GP should look not only at what the SCBD can do for the GP, but how the GP can help the SCBD.
- GEF is an important platform for engagement. The SCBD can provide information on these GEF projects and other related projects.

Executive Committee of the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity: election of EC members and the chair



- The existing EC members were presented.
- Motion of the EU and Mesoamerica to extend their terms for an additional two years: All agreed.
- A discussion was held on whether South Africa, as the only representation from Africa, can also stay on for an additional two years. All agreed.
- Elisa Romano Dezolt from Brazil as the current Chair remains on the Executive Committee for one transitional year.
- As a result, the current EC members are: EU, Finland, France, Mesoamerica, Peru and South Africa, with Brazil staying one additional year, until end of 2018.
- Mesoamerica, represented by George Jaksch, was elected next chair by acclamation.
- The new Chair expressed his thanks for the nomination and explained how he wants to serve, coordinate and receive ideas and suggestions. He emphasized the wealth of knowledge and experience that exists in the room. The common theme is the need for collaboration and need to share the wealth of knowledge.
- He emphasized that the relationship with the SCBD is crucial and that we will find ways to collaborate, share ideas on how to be more effective. He also expressed the need for more participation from companies and collaboration with governments.
- The EC membership was further clarified, noting that there are no nominations from Asia-Pacific as no one responded to the email request that went out. **The new Chair will resend an inquiry to see if there is any interest from Asia-Pacific members in joining the EC.**

Follow up to the last GP meeting in Cancun

- The SCBD reviewed the minutes from the meeting at Cancun and confirmed that most of the agreed actions were achieved. Outstanding action items include the review of the governance document, and the current plans to boost the business pages of the convention clearing house mechanism with information from partnerships. With the leadership from the new chair and the incoming P3 staff to intensify work on the business engagement, these items could be acted upon in 2019.
- The SCBD noted that feedback requested on the reporting research, the pledge questionnaire and the annual report template were all sent out to the GP members, but there was very little feedback received.
- The SCBD needs an up-to-date list of all the members from each of the GP member initiatives. It would be extremely useful to have all of the logos from all of the companies involved in the GP and have it displayed on the CBD website. **The new Chair will send an email asking for these logos, for collation by the SCBD.**
- The SBCD will provide summaries from meetings such as SBSTTA and SBI which then can be used by the GP.
- It was agreed to have an annotated agenda for the next GP meeting, as it would be helpful to guide the discussions. **SCBD will provide one for the next meeting.**

Governance document

The GP confirmed that the Governance document needs to be streamlined and amended.

- The mention of advisers/experts in the document as possible members of the EC generated discussions. The document states that the EC can have a membership of up to 3 advisers/experts separate from the initiatives. It was suggested that this could be WBCSD, IUCN etc., but it was noted that these organizations are already represented in the GP as Observers. If the observers had clearer roles, such as advisers, there would be better participation within the GP and at meetings.



- There were also discussions, but no agreement, on having actual business representation on the EC.
- Academia could also be involved.
- **The new Chair to handle next steps to review possible experts/advisers joining the EC and role of Observers.**

Reporting: presentation by Tamara Richards (SCBD)

- The reporting project is mandated from COP decisions. COP 13 decisions requires further work on the typology of action on reporting, with a view to provide guidance to be considered by SBI in July 2018.
- COP 13 also asks SCBD to seek views through the GP, as well as other partners, on how the provision of data and information on biodiversity can be harmonized.
- Tamara Richards presented the existing typology and her work to narrow it down into 3 main themes: Commitment; engagement and measurement.
- 65 sustainability reports were analysed from different sectors, regions and representing companies that are members of a national or regional initiatives of the GP.
- The issue of materiality was a key element of the research, with only 25 companies rating biodiversity as a high material issue.
- Initial results showed a lack of clarity and consistency in use of terms, with some companies reporting on biodiversity, others on ecosystems, and still others not reporting on either but referring to land use instead.
- More generally, there are a wide variety of tools available for measuring biodiversity: The NCC lists 57 different tools used for measuring biodiversity from the Natural Capital toolkit. The plethora of tools and associated methodologies is arguably an important reason for the lack of clarity and consistency, leading to difficulty in comparing information and data.
- The GRI indicators are the most widely used reporting mechanism. Of the 250 largest companies, 82 % use the GRI for their sustainability reports.
- SDG also comes up as important issue and the need to integrate any possible recommendations with the indicators already existing for SDGs 14 and 15.
- **Tamara Richards will circulate the report to GP members once the first draft is finalized, for comments and review.**

Comments and Questions on Reporting

- How the question reporting on biodiversity is framed matters, as some will refer to natural capital.
- The context of materiality depends on the country and sector and there is a lack of a standardised way to define it.
- How is Integrated Reporting involved in the research? Reply: it is included but limited, as only a few countries are using integrated reporting.
- How is the financial support that some companies give towards biodiversity being reflected? Reply: this is included under engagement.
- **The Netherlands will share information and background reports on the EU Directive on non-financial information and on a study to incorporate the EU Directive in the benchmark that the Netherlands government publishes annually on CSR reporting (*Transparency Benchmark*) . Links: EU-regulation: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/company-reporting-and-auditing/company-reporting/non-financial-reporting_en**



- **Netherlands experiences with integrating criteria based on EU/legislation in the Transparency benchmark: <https://www.transparantiebenchmark.nl/en/nieuws/study-closer-look-reporting-criteria-0>**
- **Japan will share a report that will be available in March on different levels of impact on biodiversity from different sectors.**

Business Pledge

- A reporting questionnaire for pledge signatories was sent out to GP for comments. Little feedback was given. **It will be resent with a request for review and comment.**
- The pledge will be made available for more signatories. It has been translated and is available in the 6 official languages. The reporting questionnaire will also be translated.
- Pledge signatories are due to report every 2 years on COP years and made available at COP. **SCBD to manage the process of getting questionnaires out and collecting reports.**

Annual reports

- The template for GP's to provide annual reports has been sent. Tamara Richards will resend the template.
- The GP agreed to submit their annual reports for 2016/17 period by the end of this year. **Tamara Richards to send reminder and collect reports.**

COP-14 and the Global Business Forum

Mainstreaming

- The recent COP decisions relating to business are on reporting so the work is timely and SCBD is looking for input. Also, the mainstreaming of biodiversity in energy and mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and processing, and health are relevant to the business sector.
- On mainstreaming, SBSTTA-21 will look at the scientific and technical aspects while SBI2 will look at the policy aspects. Their recommendation will provide the basis for the final negotiation and the decision by COP 14 (see above).
- Consultants were hired to work on the mainstreaming aspects for SBSTTA and beyond. Significant conceptual and analytical work has already been undertaken and will be pulled together and synthesized by the consultants, with first drafts being expected in January 2018. The final results of the work will be brought to the discussions at SBI in July 2018
- The CO 14 host country, Egypt, expressed the possibility of holding an expert workshop to prepare for COP. If it happens, the CBD/Egypt will be looking for funding, and it would be held in Egypt.

Global Forum

- Egypt is very supportive of having a business forum in parallel to the high-level meeting, with a focus on the sectors targeted for the mainstreaming discussions. There is however little funding available.
- The CBD is seeking input from the GP and asking the GP to encourage businesses to participate and attend the Business Forum.
- Side events will happen as well. These can be sectoral specific or individual lead or partnership lead. It was discussed whether there is a possibility that companies can sponsor/hold side events
- This business forum could be a very different type of meeting. COP has never had businesses logos displayed. SCBD to consult internally what is allowed and what is possible.
- Discussions were also held on whether there could be more information booths for businesses maybe even have a large parallel event in a different venue with an exhibition hall on business and biodiversity.



- The Netherlands offered to seek biodiversity leaders from the business community who might be interested in the event.
- The SCBD can work with the GP to draft the agenda for the business forum, but ultimately it is the SCBD and the host country who decide the agenda.
- The SCBD is bringing the mainstreaming discussions to other meetings: such as UN-Habitat, the World Bank, The brainstorming session in Switzerland etc.
- It was noted that there is a need for a group of global biodiversity leaders advocating for the issue, like now exists for climate change. Businesses need better direction and there is a need to seek for leaders from the business community that are taking a joint position on biodiversity.

Closing Remarks

- This a new stage for the GP with lots of “homework” to be done.
- It was noted that it is an important time with businesses now engaged on biodiversity more than ever and the GP needs to harness this momentum.



Annex I

List of Participants

Brazil	CHAIR Elisa Romano Dezolt
	Bianca Lisboa da Camara Brasil
China	WAN Xialin
	ZHONG Xiaodong
	Ms. Lu Yiqing
EU	Lars Müller
Finland	Anna Lemström
France	Claude Fromageot
	Hélène Leriche
	<u>Emma Griveau-Billion</u>
Germany	Carolin Boßmeyer
India	Arnab Deb
Japan	ADACHI Naoki
Korea	Goosun Jung
Mesoamerica	Maurice Blandino
	George Jaksch
Endorsed by George Jaksch	Starlina Guerrero
Netherlands	Hayo Haanstra
	Martin Lok
South Africa	Kiruben Naicker
Spain	Aixa Sopeña
Sri Lanka	Harshini de Silva
SBD	Amy Fraenkel
	Tamara Richards
OBSERVERS	
Birdlife	Edward Perry