



BUSINESS AND THE 2010 BIODIVERSITY CHALLENGE: EXPLORING PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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I. Introduction

In 2002, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted a Strategic Plan for the Convention including the target to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth. This target was subsequently endorsed by Heads of Government at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations General Assembly. Included in the Convention's Strategic Plan is a set of goals and objectives for more effective and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention:

- The conservation of biological diversity;
- The sustainable use of its components; and,
- The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan seeks broader engagement across society in the implementation of the Convention and is supported by a more specific Objective 4.4: “key actors and stakeholders, including the private sector, are engaged in partnership to implement the Convention and are integrating biodiversity concerns into their relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes, and policies.” This objective reflects the importance of involving the private sector¹, particularly those industries that are based on or heavily impact biodiversity and its components, in the implementation of the Convention.

Private sector involvement in the CBD has been extremely limited to date (see related information document, *Introduction to the CBD*). Although most CBD processes permit private sector participation, neither the Convention nor business have actively or consistently engaged one another. Further exploration into the opportunities for, and potential benefits and risks of cooperation needs to be undertaken with the goal of securing private sector involvement in the achievement of the objectives of the Convention. In the short-term, this involves identifying immediate measures that companies and industry associations can take to help reduce the current, unprecedented rate of biodiversity loss, and thus contribute to achieving the 2010 target. Such measures may be multistakeholder partnerships or industry driven initiatives undertaken outside of the CBD process, or they may involve integrating the private sector into formal CBD processes at intergovernmental and national levels.

¹ For the purpose of this paper, the private sector refers to any commercial enterprise or related association.

II. Rationale for Private Sector Engagement

II.1 The Perspective of the CBD and the Biodiversity Community:

The private sector represents an important potential partner in the implementation of the CBD that should be proactively engaged for the following reasons:

1. The private sector comprises players that have significant, direct impacts on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the sharing of benefits derived from genetic resources. Engaging these players in the implementation of the Convention will encourage them to avoid, minimize, and mitigate their negative impacts on biodiversity, and promote good practices that could be models for wider use. The incorporation of biodiversity considerations into business practices would make a significant contribution to progress toward the 2010 target and the objectives of the Convention.
2. Private sector associations and companies can be highly influential on governments and on public opinion. If they take the issue of biodiversity seriously, the profile of biodiversity and of the Convention itself will be raised significantly. In the context of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), for example, a coalition of companies played an important role in promoting the need for a clear and agreed regulatory framework so they could plan ahead (e.g. by investing in low-carbon technologies). Many companies lobbied governments in support of the Kyoto Protocol and for progressive post-Kyoto policies.
3. The private sector possesses biodiversity-relevant knowledge and technological resources, as well as more general skills in management, communications, and research and development. Effective mobilization of these resources could make a significant contribution to the objectives of the Convention.
4. The private sector is a major stakeholder in biodiversity-related policies and activities. Its involvement in the Convention process will help to ensure that CBD outputs (policies, guidelines, tools etc.) are realistic and, therefore, effectively contribute to the objectives of the Convention.

The private sector and its associated foundations also represent significant donors for conservation projects implemented primarily through nongovernmental organizations. Whilst this is important, it is not a reason for private sector engagement in the implementation of the CBD. Improving corporate practice will have a greater overall impact on biodiversity than funding specific projects.

II.2 The Business Perspective:

Biodiversity and its components provide all individuals and sectors with essential goods and services, the supply of which is being threatened by human activity. The continued decline in availability of these resources presents a considerable risk to future generations of both people and companies. Thus, although some businesses may choose to integrate biodiversity considerations into their practices because it is “the right thing to do” or simply as a public relations exercise, more and more companies, particularly those that heavily depend or have major impacts on biodiversity (see Section III), feel compelled to invest in biodiversity in order to sustain and improve profits.

The business case for mitigating biodiversity risks, minimizing adverse impacts on biodiversity, or investing in conservation and ecosystem restoration, is based on a company’s need to maintain its competitive advantage.

1. In industries that have significant impacts on biodiversity, a company's biodiversity record will influence its ability to access land, capital, and markets, and to obtain the legal and social "right to operate", and thus its competitive advantage. It is important to note that the CBD considers biodiversity among wider social, cultural, economic, and environmental issues; thus, a company's biodiversity record is not simply defined by its impact on genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity, but also by how it deals with broader biodiversity-related issues (e.g. access and benefit-sharing, climate change as a driver of biodiversity loss, technology transfer etc.).

A company's biodiversity record will be defined by:

- a. Compliance with legal requirements. National regulations or controls related to biodiversity may continue to increase, especially as Parties implement their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans², and in light of further biodiversity loss. Compliance will also help to maintain good relationships with regulators.
- b. Implementation of industry standards and reporting mechanisms, such as ISO 1400 or the Global Reporting Initiative. Although consideration of biodiversity issues in these standards is minimal, it is likely to increase as awareness about the importance of biodiversity spreads.
- c. Response to demands from local communities, civil society groups, and shareholders.
- d. Application of consumer-driven standards, such as the Marine Stewardship Council, Forest Stewardship Council, and organic certification schemes.

A company's biodiversity record will affect its:

- a. Access to land and natural resources: A company's legal "right to operate" on land or access natural resources may be granted or denied according to its record on biodiversity. Its record may also influence its social "right to operate", or the degree to which local communities and organizations support and enable a company's operations.
- b. Access to capital and insurance:
 - i. The World Bank, the IFC, export credit agencies, and several private banks evaluate credit risks against environmental criteria (e.g. the Equator Principles). Consequently, a company's ability to source financing may be affected by its impact on biodiversity.
 - ii. Investors also are demanding higher social and environmental standards from the companies they invest in. This is illustrated by the increase in the US dollar value of assets invested in a socially responsible manner from 40 billion in 1984 to 2.8 trillion in 2003. While some socially responsible investors avoid certain "unethical" industries all together, many engage in shareholder activism to raise the social and environmental standards of all companies that they invest in as a means of delivering good financial performance. Furthermore, social and environmental considerations are beginning to be integrated into mainstream investment decisions. Some

² Parties to the Convention commit to developing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), to implement the objectives of the Convention at the national level.

investors are focussing specifically on biodiversity issues because they believe that good management of biodiversity risks can be considered a proxy for good management overall. Thus, as the role of biodiversity in investment decisions increases, failure of companies to address biodiversity issues will lead to lower ratings in financial markets.

- iii. Insurance rates will likely rise in response to increased social and legal pressure to address biodiversity issues. In the future, higher rates may become prohibitive for some companies, while businesses and industries that have good biodiversity records may benefit from lower premiums.
 - c. Access to markets: Consumer pressure for ethically sourced and manufactured products is increasing. Although consumer-driven standards currently exist for only a small proportion of available products, the number of certification schemes is rising in conjunction with consumer awareness. As more and more large buyers, such as governments and companies that are high on the supply chain, implement “green” procurement policies, business and industry will be forced to address biodiversity issues.
 - d. Access to human capital: High quality employees are often attracted and feel loyal to companies with good social and environmental policies because they can feel proud of the work their companies do. Pride in one’s company can also acts as a motivator, making the company more productive.
- 2 A company’s overall productivity will also influence its competitive advantage and long-term sustainability. For industries that depend on biodiversity, its components, or the ecosystem services supported by biodiversity (e.g. clean water, nutrient cycling, erosion prevention) to operate, the decline in the availability of these resources and services is a production risk that could lead to decreased productivity, unreliable service, and poor product quality. Poor performance could influence their ability to access natural resources, capital, and markets. Companies that minimize their negative impacts on biodiversity and invest in ecosystem health are helping to improve their performance by guaranteeing the sustainability of their businesses. Not only are they conserving and potentially improving the supply of the resources and services on which they depend, but they are also increasing their ability to adapt to new environmental conditions and remain competitive. While the competitive advantage of managing biodiversity sustainably may be less applicable for companies that depend on openly accessible biodiversity resources, integrating biodiversity considerations into their practices will contribute to the long-term availability of such resources and, thus, the viability of their businesses.
- 3 Being able to identify or predict new markets is a competitive advantage. Pressures on biodiversity, its components, and the ecosystem services it supports has already given rise to new “green” business opportunities, including renewable energy, agroforestry, eco-tourism, and ecological restoration. As biodiversity loss continues, such opportunities will become increasingly apparent. Companies that exploit these opportunities will benefit from first mover advantage.

A company’s ability to adapt to emerging expectations and legal requirements, as well as environmental change related to biodiversity will have a direct impact on its bottom-line. In order for a company to exploit the potential competitive advantage of engaging biodiversity

issues early on, it must be familiar with biodiversity policy, the direction in which it is heading, and the tools available to assist companies in addressing biodiversity concerns. By actively participating in the CBD, companies can become more competitive by keeping informed about biodiversity-related issues, and providing input into the policies and tools that will affect them.

II.3 Opportunities

Many companies claim to be concerned about the environment, and some include biodiversity in this concern; however, few have specific strategies and policies in place to deal with biodiversity in their operations. This is reflected in a study of UK based companies in the extractive industry:

“... our preliminary research suggests that none of the twenty companies we surveyed have adequately clarified their commitments on biodiversity, and none has a complete comprehensive and transparent management system on biodiversity in place. For companies that claim environmental leadership, this is a particular concern, and raises broader questions about the quality of their sustainable development strategies”

Report from Insight Investment (2003).

While the number of studied companies addressing biodiversity in their policies has increased since then, their biodiversity-related commitments often lacked *“the detail required to...drive an improvement in performance and effective management of biodiversity risks and impacts”* (Report from Insight Investment, 2004). Although this study was based on only a small number of companies, it reflects major opportunities for improvement across the private sector. Such an improvement would be profitable for participating companies, and make a significant contribution to the attainment of the 2010 biodiversity target.

III. Industry-Biodiversity Links and Issues

The opportunities for engaging different types of industries in the implementation of the Convention are influenced by each industry’s relationship with biodiversity. Table 1, below, demonstrates the links between biodiversity issues and various types industries. Although most industries impact several aspects of biodiversity either directly or indirectly³, the table identifies only the major primary and secondary biodiversity issues associated with each type of industry. It is important to note, however, that companies, like other energy users, contribute to climate change. Such “tertiary” impacts may, in fact, pose among the most significant threats to biological diversity and its components. For the purposes of this initial analysis, however, this paper focuses on the main primary and secondary impacts.

The industry groupings in Table 1 can also be distinguished according to their operational dependence on biodiversity and whether or not they impact biodiversity directly or indirectly. Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, and pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, for example, all depend on biodiversity for their productivity and, consequently, have major direct impacts on biodiversity. Similarly, water and other extractive industries have major direct impacts on biodiversity; however, they do not necessarily depend directly on it to operate. Rather, they depend upon access to areas of land or water that may be coincident with areas of high biodiversity value. Transport, tourism, travel, manufacturing, and construction have significant indirect impacts on biodiversity due to the demands they place on natural resources. Banking, finance, and insurance industries also impact biodiversity indirectly. Whether or not their

³ Direct impacts influence biodiversity directly. (e.g. overfishing causing species loss). Indirect impacts result from actions that have effects that impact biodiversity (e.g. industrial emissions causing water pollution that leads to species loss).

profitability depends on biodiversity for productivity is determined partly by the nature of the companies that they invest in or service. In common with all major groups in civil society, however, all companies depend upon functioning ecosystems provided by biodiversity for a stable society and economy.

Table 1. Types of Industries and their Links to Biodiversity

Type of Industry	Main Biodiversity Issues
Extractive (mining, oil and gas etc.)	Primary: habitat loss and degradation; water, soil, and air pollution; species loss; disturbance of protected or biodiversity-sensitive areas. Secondary: construction of plants, settlements, and roads; operating plants; transportation.
Water	Primary: water extraction; habitat loss and degradation; water pollution. Secondary: dam and pipeline construction.
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries	Primary: harvesting of natural resources; management of production sites; water and soil pollution; habitat loss and degradation; genetically modified organisms; introduction of alien species. Secondary: construction of roads; transportation.
Transport, Tourism, and Travel	Primary: habitat loss and degradation; water and air pollution; disturbance of protected or biodiversity-sensitive areas; introduction of alien species. Secondary: construction of roads, settlements, and other infrastructure.
Manufacturing and Construction	Primary: sustainable use of natural resources; water, soil, and air pollution. Secondary: supply chain impacts; construction of infrastructure.
Retailing	Primary: products reflect sustainable sourcing, manufacturing, and management; diversity of products offered; genetically modified organisms. Secondary: supply chain impacts; construction of retail infrastructure.
Pharmaceuticals, and Biotechnology	Primary: fair and equitable sharing of benefits; sustainable use of natural resources; protection of traditional knowledge; genetically modified organisms. Secondary: construction of infrastructure.
Banking, Finance, and Insurance	Secondary: all of the above, depending on investment.

Industries that rely on biodiversity for productivity, either directly or through their supply chains, or have significant direct impacts on biodiversity arguably provide the greatest opportunities for private sector engagement. This is because they have a vested interest in biodiversity issues and because integrating biodiversity considerations into their practices could play a major role in reducing the current rate of biodiversity loss. Engaging industries that have significant indirect impacts on biodiversity, such as banking, finance, and insurance industries is also important, as they possess the potential to turn biodiversity into a high profile issue for the private sector.

IV. Risks

IV.1 Risks to the Convention on Biodiversity

Private sector engagement in the CBD presents certain risks to the Convention process that must be considered:

1. Parties establish policy in the Convention process. In engaging the private sector this must always be born in mind: several companies are much bigger and more powerful than many of our Parties. It is one of the central obligations of the Secretariat to protect the integrity of the Convention process.
2. Companies that have significant impacts on biodiversity, by definition, have vested interests that may imply particular approaches to biodiversity conservation, use, and benefit sharing, as

well as the regulation of such activities. In certain private sector companies these interests may be very strong. Strengthening such “negative lobbying” would be counterproductive.

3. “There is no such thing as a free lunch”. If the CBD Secretariat solicits or receives funding from the private sector, a payback will be suspected and may be expected, putting the independence of the Secretariat or the Convention process in doubt. Thus, the Secretariat should not receive funds from private companies for its core functions.
4. As with all stakeholders, dealings with the private sector must be fully transparent and open.
5. The CBD must be careful not to undermine existing initiatives to promote increased biodiversity-related standards by others, including industry groups, investors, and critics, by providing a perception of endorsement of particular companies or greenwashing. Any partnerships with the private sector should, as a minimum, “do no harm”. They should also be carried out in a way that sustains civil society support for the Convention.

The UN Guidelines for Dealing with Business⁴ and guidelines used by other organizations could be useful models for private sector involvement in the Convention on Biodiversity.

IV.2 Risks to the Private Sector

The risks of engaging in the implementation of the Convention faced by companies and industry associations must also be considered. Some potential risks are listed below:

1. By engaging in discussions about achieving the CBD’s objectives and by publicly committing to integrating biodiversity considerations into company policies and practices, companies may contribute to rising societal expectations regarding their contribution to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. This may give rise to additional operating costs and could create risks if companies did not meet these expectations. Such costs and risks would need to be weighed against the short- and long-term business case for best practice in managing biodiversity.
2. Engaging in biodiversity issues requires human and financial resources.
3. While many argue that voluntary engagement in biodiversity issues by the private sector would decrease the pressure for biodiversity-related regulation, it could eventually give rise to a more detailed policy framework for biodiversity issues that may lead to increased regulatory measures.

V. Potential Mechanisms for Engagement

Potential mechanisms for engaging the private sector in the implementation of the Convention are listed below. They have been divided into two broad categories: engagement in the implementation of the CBD objectives (which companies and their organisations could choose to take on independently from the intergovernmental CBD process) and engagement in the formal CBD process (through involvement in CBD meetings at the international or national levels).

⁴ The UN Guidelines for Dealing with Business can be found at <http://www.un.org/partners/business/index.asp>

The mechanisms outlined below should be considered bearing in mind the rationale for, and the risks of, engagement. They represent some of the possible measure for private sector engagement and are intended to provide examples on which to build.

V.1 Engagement in the Implementation of CBD Objectives

Private sector engagement in biodiversity issues could involve integrating biodiversity into companies' operational policies, partnering to implement biodiversity projects, or raising awareness about biodiversity. This may require support from Parties, the Secretariat, and civil society organizations in the form of partnerships, incentives, guidelines, training, and other tools. Possible mechanisms include:

1. Encouraging companies to adopt progressive policies and best practices that can help to implement the Convention, and also to promote and implement more radical pro-biodiversity policies and voluntary initiatives. Companies can use progressive, pro-biodiversity policies as part of their strategy and vision to secure market advantage, not only through good public relations, but also through first mover advantage by developing technologies and practices that enable them to adapt to, and even surpass, new and envisaged regulations, voluntary guidelines, or industry standards. The following measures may help to encourage engagement:
 - a. Biodiversity standards. Current environmental and industry standards rarely reflect the full range of biodiversity issues, if they reflect them at all. Thus, there is a need to define a comprehensive set of biodiversity standards to help companies define their biodiversity policies and measure their performance. This could be done by developing sector specific benchmarks (oil and gas, mining and minerals, forestry etc.) that follow a uniform approach, or by working to integrate biodiversity into existing standards or reporting guidelines (e.g. ISO 14001 or the Global Reporting Initiative).
 - b. Tools for implementing biodiversity policies. Many companies have already made biodiversity-related policy commitments; however, they often lack the strategies and tools to fulfil them. Resources or partnerships could be created to help companies translate biodiversity commitments into their daily operations. This could involve altering their practices directly (using sustainably sourced materials, developing technologies that minimize resource use, rehabilitating sites after use etc.), compensating for unavoidable adverse impacts by investing in conservation activities (biodiversity offsets), or a combination of both.
 - c. Knowledge sharing. Although private sector engagement in biodiversity issues is limited, some companies and industry associations have significant experience dealing with them. This experience could be shared with other companies through workshops, online forums, and case studies.
2. Assisting Parties to develop and implement incentive measure for private sector engagement in the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of its components. Regulatory measures, while valuable, are generally difficult and expensive to enforce, and based on minimum standards. Incentive measures, such as trading schemes or taxes, on the other hand, often encourage innovation that leads to higher standards. Similarly, working with Parties to remove perverse incentives would help to raise the profile of biodiversity issues within the private sector. Both of these modalities are supported by Article 11 of the Convention and numerous decisions of the Conference of the Parties.

3. Encouraging the private sector to raise the profile of and awareness about biodiversity within business, industry, and finance, as well as among governments and the general public in order to mainstream biodiversity issues. Companies and industry associations could:
 - a. Engage in industry wide initiatives to raise the profile of biodiversity across society. Industry associations could lead or partner with relevant NGOs to develop a unifying campaign to generate momentum for biodiversity issues within the business community and raise awareness about them more broadly. An industry led “No Net Loss” campaign, for example, could be developed to define and focus business’ contribution to the 2010 biodiversity target and could include a statement of support for and commitment to the target. This or similar ideas could be considered as business contributions to a Global Biodiversity Partnership.
 - b. Design and implement campaigns to raise awareness about biodiversity issues that affect them or that they impact, citing measures they have taken to deal with them. Such campaigns could be public relations activities for businesses or methods of sustaining the availability of natural resources on which they depend for operations. This measure may be particularly appropriate for industry associations for natural resource-intensive industries.

As stated in the introduction to this section, the above mechanisms for private sector engagement in the implementation of the objectives of the Convention could be developed and implemented within the formal CBD process, separate from the formal CBD process, or in an intermediary way. These options are defined as follows:

1. Within the formal CBD process: guidelines or tools could be developed by official CBD bodies and as part of the work programmes of the Convention. This process would be driven by a mandate from the Conference of the Parties (see related information document, *Introduction to the CBD* for further elaboration on the CBD process).
2. Separate from the formal CBD process: mechanisms could be developed by industry alone or through partnerships with government agencies and civil society organizations.
3. With support from the CBD: mechanisms could be developed outside of the formal CBD process, but in consultation with CBD bodies or be considered for endorsement by the Conference of the Parties as a means of broadening support for them amongst government agencies and civil society organizations.

V.2 Engaging the Private Sector in the CBD Process

Facilitating the participation of the private sector, as a legitimate stakeholder, in the Convention process will help keep the private sector informed of and engaged in biodiversity policy issues. It will draw upon the skills, technologies, and capacity of business and industry to share best practices, and to help to ensure that products from the Convention process (tools, guidelines etc.) are realistic and practical.

1. Encouraging Parties to engage companies and industry associations operating under their jurisdiction in the national implementation of the Convention would help to ensure that companies are aware of and complying with biodiversity-related national legislation and contributing to the objectives of the Convention. It could occur through involving the private sector in the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and other biodiversity-related policies and regulations, such as resource supply acts, product certification mechanisms, and planning regulations.

2. Private sector involvement at the intergovernmental level could include:
 - a. Encouraging, through existing mechanisms, private sector input into COP, SBSTTA (Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice), and other relevant open-ended CBD meetings;
 - b. Facilitating private sector input into the thematic programmes of work and cross-cutting issues of the Convention, the Biosafety Protocol, the Clearing-House Mechanism, and other related Convention processes. This could be done through consultation and by inviting the private sector to participate in relevant expert panels and liaison group meetings;
 - c. Creating a specific mechanism for private sector involvement in the CBD process, such as a COP Decision on private sector engagement, a liaison group or working group on private sector issues, or a formal agreement between the Convention and private sector companies.

3. Mechanisms to facilitate and encourage private sector engagement in the CBD process could include:
 - a. Communicating the importance of biodiversity and results of the Convention process to the private sector, so that it is aware of the need to address biodiversity issues and of the existence of policies, norms, and guidelines emanating from the CBD and related processes that may influence its practices. This will assist companies to comply with such policies, maintain pressure on them to increase standards, and encourage them to become industry leaders on biodiversity issues.
 - b. Training seminars and tools on speaking the same language. Lack of understanding is often a major barrier to engagement with any issue or partnership. Training workshops and tools could be developed to familiarize the private sector with the Convention process and to assist the public sector to communicate with business more effectively.

VI. Existing Initiatives and Opportunities

Specific methods of private sector engagement should be defined against the background of existing business and biodiversity initiatives to ensure they build upon the lessons learned from, and do not undermine or duplicate, existing initiatives. A diverse and indicative sample of existing initiatives is presented below (see related information document, *Business and Biodiversity Initiatives*, for a more comprehensive list):

1. The Energy and Biodiversity Initiative (EBI) is a partnership amongst four companies (BP, ChevronTexaco, Shell, Statoil) and five conservation organizations (Conservation International, Fauna and Flora International, IUCN (The World Conservation Union), The Nature Conservancy, Smithsonian Institution) to improve the environmental performance of energy operations and maximize opportunities for biodiversity conservation in the oil and gas industry. It has developed a number of tools and guidelines for this purpose.

2. Responding to Climate Change (RTCC) is an NGO and official observer to the UN Climate Change negotiations that has strategic partnerships with several companies, industry associations, and government agencies. It develops information products and channels through which business, government, and other NGOs can learn more about the threat of climate change to the environment and formulate responses. One of its key objectives is to help prove the business case for involvement with climate change responses, and to support multistakeholder partnership initiatives. Lessons from RTCC's involvement with the private

sector in relation to the climate change issues and the UNFCCC could be relevant to engaging business in the implementation of the CBD.

3. Several non- and intergovernmental biodiversity organizations have developed programmes of private sector engagement. IUCN launched its Business and Biodiversity Initiative in 2001 and works with several civil society and private sector partners to mainstream biodiversity in business. The IUCN-ICMM (International Council for Mining and Minerals) dialogue, for example, aims to improve the performance of the mining industry in the area of biodiversity conservation and provide a platform for collaboration amongst stakeholders.
4. There are a number of companies that have very strict ethical standards and/or specific policies on biodiversity. Unilever, a founder of the Marine Stewardship Council (with WWF), has set itself a target of using only sustainably sourced fish by 2005 – this is far ahead of the WSSD and CBD targets and could be used to ratchet up standards, and more importantly, to give credibility to the 2010 target.
5. Several companies have also entered into partnerships or created foundations to provide resources for biodiversity initiatives. The British American Tobacco Partnership with FFI, Earthwatch Institute, Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, and the Tropical Biology Association was founded on a mutual interest in exploring and developing the role of business in the conservation and management of biodiversity. It provides resources for a portfolio of over 20 projects worldwide, such as the Flower Valley Conservation Trust, a grassroots business and biodiversity initiative to sustainably harvest and conserve wild fynbos in South Africa.
6. Several investment funds are addressing biodiversity concerns in the companies in which they invest. Insight Investment, the asset manager for the Halifax and Bank of Scotland applies its policy on corporate governance and corporate responsibility to all the assets that it manages (c. £75 billion) and engages with companies to encourage them to adopt high standards on social, environmental, and ethical issues. It is currently working with the extractive and utility companies it invests in to integrate biodiversity into their practices. It reports that although there continues to be room for improvement, companies are beginning to respond to biodiversity concerns.

These various approaches can be mutually supportive in driving up standards and promoting biodiversity issues.

VII. Next Steps

A number of potential avenues for private sector engagement in biodiversity issues and the Convention on Biological Diversity have been outlined above. These opportunities, and others that may be proposed, need to be explored and developed further in order to identify, and subsequently implement, the options that are most viable and that will have the greatest impact. The following upcoming meetings are possible venues for side events to advance, and engage a broader audience in this process:

1. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the Convention, 5-9 September 2005, Montreal.
2. 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (COP-8), 8-19 May, Brazil.
3. Meetings of other subsidiary bodies of the Convention (Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing, Working Group on Article 8(j), and Working Group on Protected Areas)

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