



Background discussion note

for workshop

D: Business and Biodiversity Partnerships

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Business and Biodiversity Partnerships

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1. Introduction

Sustainable development can best be achieved by the commitment and interaction of Governments, Civil Society, Individuals and Businesses. The absence or indifference of any one of these stakeholders can lead to a seriously compromised outcome, falling well short of the desired goals. Over the recent past, more and more businesses have come to realise that their own long term survival depends not only on traditional Key Success Factors like quality, customer focus, innovation, value for money, robust supply chains, integrity, but also on their wider interactions with people in the communities where they operate, with the environment and with the economy as a whole. Such relationships, expressed within the now commonly-used term, Corporate Social Responsibility, demonstrate businesses' acknowledgement of their obligations and contribution to sustainable development of the three elements, society, the environment and the economy.

Conserving and sustainably using biodiversity is a vital part of development and nature conservation.

2. Types of Partnership

Partnerships can take many forms, from the informal provision of information on biodiversity issues to improve understanding among staff and other business stakeholders, to long term contractual arrangements covering multiple activities and sites, perhaps with secondment of personnel on both sides.

Some examples:

- **Private sector-Civil Society partnerships**

Typically this would be a partnership with a conservation organization for technical assistance and capacity building

- **Private sector-Public sector-Civil Society partnerships**

A tripartite arrangement best meets requirements and can be very successful when the objectives of the Biodiversity Action Plan directly involve state-owned land.

- **Private sector partnerships**

Such partnerships between private sector businesses are forged to enable participant companies to address jointly sectoral issues, develop common standards of behaviour to reduce biodiversity degradation and to pool their relevant expertise.

- **Private sector-Public sector partnerships**

These partnerships are particularly suited to situations where the company's business activities involve usage of or access to public property or natural resources.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships**

Partnerships with many different partners may be the most appropriate model when up-stream or down-stream companies are critical to the desired biodiversity outcome or where several different civil society groups are required for geographic or specialisation coverage.

- **Private sector-local communities**

In many instances, effective partnerships with local communities will be absolutely critical in achieving biodiversity objectives. Without their engagement, recognising the criticality of building trust and capacity, success may be elusive or short-lived.

3. Why engage in biodiversity partnerships between varieties of stakeholders?

To tackle biodiversity loss in Europe, the European Commission stated that one of the four supporting measures identified in the 2006 Biodiversity Communication is building partnerships between government, academia, conservation practitioners, landowners and users, private sector, finance sector, educational sector and the media. It involves building on existing provisions (e.g. under the Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries Policy) and the development of new partnerships, including outside the EU. ¹

WWF stated that “Our partnerships with the private sector not only provide conservation benefits which help us carry out our mission, but also give us the opportunity to work together with the business sector to increase its commitments to sustainable development and environmentally sound business practices”.

“Understanding and reducing the environmental impact of our activities is a top business priority. The partnership with WWF has given us invaluable support in managing issues and in building environmental awareness, helping us to ensure that environmental issues are everybody’s business,” explained Veli Sundbäck, Executive Vice-President, Corporate Relations & Responsibility, Nokia.

Partnerships can generate many Synergies:

- **Expertise**

Enable partners to access skills and know-how unavailable in their own organizations.

- **Training**

Through formal and informal training and coaching activities, partnerships help to build morale and engagement, thereby improving staff performance, recruitment and retention.

- **Risk Management**

Businesses become more expert at assessing and managing the environmental risks associated with their operations, mitigating compliance and reputation risks.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/partnerships/index_en.htm

– **Resources**

Facilitate access to human, financial, land and other resources in the pursuit of the agreed goals.

– **Focus on results**

Partnerships can result in powerful, motivated alliances, mutually supportive, leading to an irrepressible “eagerness to succeed”.

– **Financial**

Businesses’ financial performance can be improved by an enhanced, ethical brand image, increased customer loyalty, avoidance of regulatory costs associated with non-compliance of environmental legislation, faster obtention of building or operating permits, lower cost of capital and bank credit and a wider network of willing suppliers.

4. Examples of successful partnerships

There are many examples of successful partnerships in many parts of the world; a few are cited by way of illustration.

4.1. British American Tobacco (BAT)/Various partners

BAT’s biodiversity programme supports the development of:

1. Projects which embed biodiversity assessment, management and conservation into BAT’s operations
2. Projects which aim to achieve conservation of biodiversity in areas of mutual interest to BAT and its conservation partners.

All projects are selected according to criteria laid out in the Memorandum of Understanding. These include compliance with conservation priorities identified by the partners and with relevance to BAT’s activities world-wide and location in countries that are important leaf-growing areas.

Partners: Earthwatch, Fauna & Flora International, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Tropical Biology Association.

To learn more about this partnership go to:

<http://www.batbiodiversity.org/proof/Content/partners/index.php>

4.2. Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto's stated objective is to have a net positive impact (NPI) on biodiversity. Their biodiversity programmes have focused on two key issues towards achieving that goal:

1. Being able to effectively measure and communicate the company's impacts on biodiversity and the performance of management actions; and
2. Methodologies for innovative compensation or offsetting of residual biodiversity impacts.

Initially, operations use mitigation measures, including actions designed to avoid, minimise and rectify negative impacts. Offsets through sustainable conservation actions, capacity building programmes and livelihood initiatives may then be necessary to compensate for the residual harm to biodiversity and help the company achieve a Net Positive Impact.

Rio Tinto's partnership programme is under-pinned by alliances with seventeen different partners including, to name a few, Earthwatch, WWF Australia, Birdlife International, UNEP, Royal Botanic Gardens.

Rio Tinto's CEOs stated that "Working with BirdLife and other biodiversity partners has assisted Rio Tinto to develop tools and good practice for integrating biodiversity conservation into its business practices."

For more information on Rio Tinto's partnerships go to:

http://www.riotinto.com/media/599_partnerships.asp

4.3. Shell/Smithsonian Institution Monitoring and Assessment Biodiversity Program (SI/MAB)

Shell and SI/MAB's partnership focuses on Gabon's Gamba Complex, a protected area system that hosts rich biodiversity and the country's largest onshore oil reserves. The objectives are to increase and disseminate the knowledge from the biodiversity assessments while building the in-country capacity to conduct the assessments, promoting links among the stakeholders and advancing the business-research model.

Fieldwork has catalogued nearly 3000 species, with new species recorded for fish, amphibians, reptiles, insects and trees. Thirty-two Gabon nationals have been trained in standard sampling protocols and a biodiversity centre has been established as a science centre for Gabon and learning laboratory for local communities. Furthermore, SI/MAB will continue to work in the Gamba Complex with Shell Gabon, conducting longer term ecological monitoring against key indicators of impacts, as well as supporting the integration of biodiversity into Shell Gabon's business processes and management system.

Ultimately, the goal is for Shell to build on what it has learned from this partnership and transfer experience and knowledge to other Shell operations and to the industry in general.

To learn more about Shell's partnerships go to: http://www.shell.com/home/content/envirosoc-en/environment/biodiversity/our_work_with_others/our_work_with_others_000407.html

4.4. Holcim/IUCN

As an example of a recent, ground-breaking biodiversity partnership, the leading building materials company Holcim and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) have signed a cooperation agreement to work jointly on ecosystem conservation and biodiversity issues relevant to the building materials sector.

The main areas of collaboration are:

1. Review and assessment of Holcim's approach to biodiversity conservation management;
2. Development of a comprehensive biodiversity policy and strategy;
3. Identification and development of joint initiatives supporting sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity conservation, and
4. Promotion of good practice by sharing the learning with the wider industry and conservation communities.

IUCN and Holcim in Sri Lanka have agreed on the first projects to review the quality of biodiversity conservation activities at Holcim sites in Sri Lanka and to facilitate existing quarry rehabilitation planning and implementation. Holcim Sri Lanka on its part will bring in technical expertise to contribute to the rehabilitation efforts of coral ecosystems. Furthermore the use of sustainably produced biomass as an alternative fuel will be explored to open up an additional source of income for the communities around Holcim sites.

Markus Akermann from Holcim stated that: *"The engagement with IUCN is driven by the conviction that biodiversity conservation issues will play an ever more important role in our long-term resource and reserve strategy. IUCN and its network provide biodiversity expertise and enable Holcim to work more closely with relevant stakeholders across the world."*

Julia Marton-Lefèvre said that *"IUCN seeks intensified private sector engagement to persuade and enable businesses to reduce their environmental footprint and make a positive contribution to nature conservation. With its global presence and commitment to sustainable development, Holcim is an attractive partner for us."*

For more information on this partnership go to: <http://www.iucn.org/themes/business/Cement>

Table 1: Other summarised examples of on-going partnerships

Business Partner	Conservation Partner(s)	Goals
The Coca-Cola Company	WWF	To conserve and protect freshwater resources around the world, specifically to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Measurably conserve seven key freshwater river basins; – Improve efficiency of the company's water use; – Support more efficient use in its agricultural supply chains; and – Decrease the company's carbon dioxide emissions and energy use.
Cadbury Schweppes	Earthwatch	A joint field research project in Ghana examining the relationship between cocoa farming and wildlife.
HSBC	Earthwatch, WWF, BGI	Investing In Nature is a five year USD50mn programme focused on vital conservation research projects. By the end of 2007, 2000 HSBC employees from across the world will have participated in field research projects, making a huge contribution to conservation research. The programme has also provided training for 230 emerging scientists from developing countries to help protect some of the world's biodiversity hot spots and enabling Earthwatch Institute to develop its reporting capacity (with UNEP WCMC).
Nokia	WWF	To drive environmental awareness of the company's employees, to find new ways to enhance Nokia's environmental performance and support WWF's conservation goals.
GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)	Earthwatch	The partnership is developing in a number of areas around biodiversity and ecosystems in relation to GSK's business and operational sites, looking at the impacts of particular products, employee education and awareness raising, biodiversity training and participation on GSK's external stakeholder advisory panel.
Lafarge	WWF	To reinforce the environmental policy of Lafarge, to curtail emissions of CO ₂ , to develop a strategy for the ecological rehabilitation of quarries, to heighten awareness amongst the widest possible audience on the importance of environmental preservation through local partnerships such as in Kenya, Austria, France and China.

5. Challenges

- To establish a partnership there is a need to establish an enabling environment for potential partners to meet. It is difficult for a private business to identify the potential NGO or Government Agency that will be willing to enter into a partnership. At the same time for the NGOs and the Government Agencies is also difficult to learn to trust potential partners.
- For a partnership to work, as a minimum, the partners need to have a clear agreement on and whole-hearted commitment to the objectives and benefits. So the first challenge is to develop and be precise about the objectives, identify the benefits, and gain commitment to them on a wide scale. An effective communication programme is imperative with demonstrable support from senior levels of the organization.
- Spend time to understand the cultures of your partner(s) and what “makes them tick.” It is not unusual to find that your organisation’s priorities and theirs do not coincide, and priorities influence behaviour! Mutual understanding will help to avoid some unnecessary friction.
- Be prepared to find different degrees of acceptance or resistance as between the company’s headquarters and their operational units where most of the biodiversity work will, of necessity, take place. One size does not fit all!
- Develop jointly the framework and procedures for measuring performance against the objectives. Corrective action to keep on track will almost certainly be required. This too will need ample and open debate amongst the stakeholders.
- Training and capacity building are key to the ongoing success of partnership endeavours so time and resources will need to be made available to develop and deliver a carefully designed programme.
- Reach out to as many employees of the company as is possible, even in small, seemingly insignificant ways. Their involvement will surely give the initiatives much welcomed momentum.

Key questions to ensure that EU companies establish new and strengthen existing partnerships

- What kinds of incentives are needed to promote Business & Biodiversity partnerships in Europe?
- How will companies convince their business units to engage in Business & Biodiversity partnerships?
- How can we ensure businesses include biodiversity as a core business issue?

- Can NGOs engage creatively with businesses and governments without compromising their integrity?
- How will partners evaluate achievements and effectiveness in delivering mutual objectives?

6. Annex

6.1. Acknowledgements

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6.2. References

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From challenge to opportunity. The role of business in tomorrow's society. (2006) World Business Council for Sustainable Development. www.wbcsd.org

A Guide to Biodiversity for the Private Sector. Partnerships Alliances to Address Biodiversity Issues. International Financial Corporation. www.ifc.org/biodiversityguide

Engaging businesses with biodiversity. Guidelines for local biodiversity partnerships. (2005) Earthwatch institute. www.earthwatch.org

A European Roadmap for Businesses. Towards a sustainable and competitive enterprise. CSR Europe. www.csreurope.org

6.3. Additional related websites

<http://www.earthwatch.org/site/pp.asp?c=crLQK3PHLsF&b=1204801>

http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/how_we_work/businesses/index.cfm

<http://www.iucn.org/themes/business/>

<http://www.cbd.int/cooperation/partnership.shtml>

<https://www.cbd.int/decisions/default.shtml?m=COP-08&id=11031&lg=0>

<http://www.celb.org/xp/CELB/>

<http://www.theebi.org/>

<http://www.fauna-flora.org/business.php>

<https://www.katoombagroup.org/>

<http://www.rtcc.org/2007/html>

<http://www.toinitiative.org/>

<http://businessandbiodiversity.org>

<http://www.greeningofindustry.org>

<https://www.bsr.org>

<http://www.wbcdcement.org/>

<http://www.geocities.com/aboutcsbe/>

<http://www.ciria.org/>

<https://www.icmm.com>

<http://www.tourismpartnership.org/>

<http://www.ifoam.org/>

<http://www.ipieca.org/>

<http://www.wbsd.org/>

<https://www.opg.com/index.asp>

<https://www.shell.com>

<http://www.unilever.com/>

<http://www.fsc.org/en/>

<http://www.aquariumcouncil.org/>

<http://www.msc.org/>

<https://www.ceres.org>

<http://www.equator-principles.com/>

<http://www.insightinvestment.com>