



# How to engage with national governments to support an ambitious National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) update process

A national engagement guide for business organizations



August 2023



## About this guide

This guide aims to support business associations or other organizations with a business network in their engagement with national governments on the implementation of the GBF. This should aim at ensuring that updated NBSAPs reflect the ambition of the targets and clearly outline the role and responsibilities businesses and financial institutions to support the effective implementation. This guide provides recommendations on how to engage national governments and the business community in this process.





## Introduction

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted in December 2022 at the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). For the first time in the CBD history, the Framework strongly recognizes the role of non-state actors, including businesses and financial institutions, in delivering the Convention's objectives.

Businesses and financial institutions therefore have a responsibility to act now. They should urgently assess and disclose their nature-related risks, impacts and dependencies and transform their business to reduce negative impacts and increase positive impacts. By doing so they will contribute to halting and reversing nature loss as laid out in [Target 15](#) of the GBF.

### What is an NBSAP?

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are the main implementation mechanisms of the CBD as per Article 6(a) of the Convention. Countries that are signatories to the CBD will have to update their NBSAP before COP16, likely to take place in October 2024, to define the concrete actions they will take to implement the 23 Targets of the GBF, considering national circumstances. NBSAPs are therefore the national plans that integrate nature conservation, restoration and sustainable use into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programs and policies and should contain a sequence of steps to be taken to meet these goals.

### Why is it important for NBSAPs to clearly define the role of business?

NBSAPs are an action plan for governments to implement the GBF. However, this implementation won't be successful without a whole-of-society approach. Business and finance, together with other non-state actors, play a critical role in this journey which is why their responsibilities should be clearly outlined in NBSAPs. This is a crucial first step to ensure they are contributing to the country's national targets on nature protection and restoration.

An NBSAP could, for instance, include a business action plan that defines how an enabling environment and regulatory framework will be created for all businesses and financial institutions to assess and disclose their nature-related risks, impacts and dependencies as well as to commit and transform their business models and operations to contribute to the 2030 mission of halting and reversing nature loss.

### Why support governments in NBSAP updates?

Governments, in particular environment ministries that in most countries oversee the developing of NBSAPs, often have limited engagement with the business community and are keen to engage in dialogues with business organizations to discuss the policies and regulation needed to accelerate business action. National business organizations who focus on sustainability are important to represent the leading business voice and facilitate discussion between governments and progressive businesses and push for ambitious policies and regulation.





## Objective – Develop a biodiversity business action plan

Governments should develop a clear, robust and ambitious business action plan with a set of strategies, actions, anticipated policies or regulations and indicators to encourage, enable or require all businesses and financial institutions to contribute to the implementation of the GBF targets. This includes targets that incentivize and encourage companies to reduce their negative impacts on nature and increase positive ones in line with the 2030 mission to halt and reverse nature loss. This action plan can be a stand-alone policy or mainstreamed as part of the NBSAPs.

### What should a biodiversity business action plan include?

Not all targets of the GBF are relevant to all businesses in all countries. Therefore, it is important governments assess targets to determine their relevance for business while considering national priorities and circumstances.

As a minimum, a business action plan should include:

- ✓ A **general strategy** that sets the objectives for business actions (i.e. contribution to conservation, sustainable land use...).
- ✓ A **theory of change** to justify why involvement of business is important for implementation of the GBF at the national level. This can also be a basis to define the role of business, especially on what type of business is expected to act, from which sectors, and of which size, e.g. Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises.
- ✓ A **baseline analysis** of national policies relating to business and biodiversity, leading to a gap analysis.
- ✓ A **list of actions, policies and/or regulations**, based on the gap analysis governments will take to operationalize the strategy. These should be as specific as possible.
- ✓ **Identification of which government organization(s) or department(s)** will lead implementation of each action and ensure it is achieved.
- ✓ **Defined timeframe** to implement the action in this decade: short (2-3 years), medium (4-5 years), long (6-7).
- ✓ **Indicators** to monitor progress and ensure a ratchet of actions to reach the objective.



## How to engage

Please note all activities are subject to adaptations to accommodate your country's national context. To support governments in this process, you could consider the following activities:

### Activity 1 – Engage with relevant government authorities to understand the NBSAP update process

Understanding how your government is planning to review and update the NBSAP is a fundamental first step to engage in the implementation of the GBF. Some countries have already started this process and others are only at the beginning.

We recommend organizing an introductory meeting with the relevant government authority so you can discuss how you can contribute to the NBSAP update process. The NBSAP review and update is typically led by the Ministry of Environment or the Ministry/Agency/Department responsible for natural resources. See the [CBD country profile website](#) to find the CBD National Focal Points for each country and their contact details (select your country on the drop down on the left of the webpage).

This introductory meeting would be an opportunity to express your interest in being part of this process, as well as clarifying timelines.

Ideally, organize regular meetings with your government so you can continue working together on the engagement of business and finance throughout this process.

#### Key questions to discuss with the government:

- How are you planning the revision and update of the NBSAP from now until COP16?
- How are you planning to incorporate the non-state actors' contributions, including business and finance, in the GBF implementation?
- Are you planning to have a "business chapter/annex" as part of the NBSAP or include them as a crosscutting topic?
- Is there any existing coordination body or mechanism to engage non-state actors, particularly businesses and financial institutions, in the NBSAPs development and GBF implementation?

### Activity 2 – Define the scope of collaboration

Define the output of the collaboration with your government considering the needs of your country and the government's timeframe to update the NBSAP (see questions in Box 1 for reference). A business action plan could take different forms and have different names. It could be part of the NBSAP or be a standalone document or policy.

Together with your government, identify key moments and activities to which your organization can contribute to ensure the leading business voice is heard and supports a high level of ambition, for example through organizing business consultations, a workshop to prioritize targets at the national level, identifying needs and gaps in regulation, testing potential actions to be included in the business action plan, etc.

Define and agree a joint workplan that includes specific activities and expected outcomes which are aligned with the official timeline for updating the NBSAP. This will help define the extent to which you can contribute to the process considering your available resources.



### Activity 3- Establish a Leading Business Advisory Group

Business-government dialogues, with leading business voices, are an essential activity at an early stage of the process to understand the needs and priorities of both policymakers and progressive businesses to push the ambition higher. Having these dialogues is crucial for effective and inclusive planning and to ensure the ambition of national targets is aligned with the GBFs mission to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030.

To organize business-government dialogues, you can start by establishing a Leading Business Advisory Group, with representatives of businesses who are already leading on the nature agenda. Having the right businesses participate means they will provide the courage, comfort and technical expertise for governments to adopt effective policies that lead to the achievement of the goals and targets of the GBF. Having less ambitious businesses in the room, will not lead to this outcome.

The main purpose of the Leading Business Advisory Group is to provide guidance and advice to the government during the NBSAP updating process in an organized manner, as well as inform the development of the business action plans.

We recommend writing clear Terms of Reference (ToR) to determine how the work of this group will be conducted, to set expectations and clarify the level of ambition. The ToR could also define criteria to select members, how many times the group is expected to meet, how decisions will be made, what type of work they would do, etc. It is important to circulate this ToR when inviting business representatives to join the group so they understand what is expected. See a [ToR template](#) that can be adapted to your needs.

#### What do we mean by leading businesses?

Leading businesses are those that are taking ambitious and credible actions to reduce their negative impacts on nature and support robust and ambitious environmental policies or legislations. Focus on companies with a strong track record of positive outcomes and who are serious about understanding how to transform their businesses.

### Activity 4- Raise awareness amongst business on the GBF and NBSAPs

Based on the GBF goals and targets, governments may establish legal, administrative or policy measures that will require action from companies with operations in the country, including companies that have supply chains in the country, but are head-quartered elsewhere.

Awareness raising is essential to make sure the wider business and finance communities in the country understand the potential implications and prepare to take action to contribute to a nature-positive economy.

Outreach activities you can do:

- Organize a webinar on the adoption of the GBF and the role of business and finance in the achievement of its goals and targets.
- Organize a workshop/roundtable discussions with business representatives to engage them in meaningful conversations on different nature topics relevant for the industries in the country.
- Develop communication materials or amplify business for nature's content to raise awareness through your social media channels.
- Encourage businesses and financial institutions to act now by assessing, committing, transforming and disclosing as [described here](#).



## Activity 5- Support your government in developing an NBSAPs that outlines the role and responsibility of business

Based on engagement from the Leading Business Advisory Group, provide technical support to your governments on how to reflect the role of business and finance in updated NBSAPs. We have developed eight high-level recommendations on how to ensure updated NBSAPs effectively include the role of businesses and financial institutions in the implementation of the GBF:

1. Recognize the importance of business and finance actors
2. Include a baseline analysis of the national situation on business and finance in biodiversity
3. Develop clear business strategies, sectoral action plans, with a monitoring mechanism
4. Propose a coordination mechanism between the business and finance community and government
5. Define a clear roadmap for the implementation of Target 15
6. Define a clear roadmap for the implementation of Target 18
7. Include a robust finance transition plan
8. Develop a mechanism to integrate non-state actors' commitments and actions into the NBSAPs

Make sure you read the full recommendations [here](#) and adapt to your country's needs and circumstances.

## Activity 6- Engage all stakeholders through transparent consultation

While supporting the development of the business action plan, engagement with other non-state actors is important. Transparency and stakeholder engagement is key to building credibility and accountability when driving business action and ambition. We recommend testing actions, plans and draft iterations or elements of the business action plan through consultations. These are an effective and organized way of collecting relevant information and insight from a broader audience of stakeholders, including beyond the business community.

A consultation could take the form of an online survey, in-person or virtual workshop, targeted interviews or focal group discussions.

**Consulting the business community** could aim to:

- Collect information to understand how advanced your national business community is in their nature-positive journey (e.g. do they know their impacts and dependencies? Do they have a biodiversity strategy?)
- Collect information on what the companies need from the government to enable them to take more ambitious actions on nature.
- Identify gaps in knowledge or capacity limitations that need to be addressed in your business community.
- Ensure that proposed solutions are ambitious, effective and enforceable.

**Consulting a broader group of stakeholders** could aim to:

- Identify the interests and needs of relevant stakeholders including for example youth, women, indigenous peoples and local communities, subnational governments, to be considered when developing the business action plan, including safeguards to protect vulnerable groups.
- Identify key challenges that need urgent action or need to be prioritized.
- Ensure that proposed solutions are ambitious, effective and enforceable.



## Resources

### Essential reads

CBD Guidance notes on Targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework - [2030 Targets and Guidance Notes \(cbd.int\)](#)

Business for Nature [Recommendations for governments to include the role of business and finance in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans \(NBSAPs\)](#)

Business for Nature [Recommendations for governments on how to implement Target 15 \(a\) of the Global Biodiversity Framework](#)

Latest NBSAPs submitted [Search NBSAPs and National Reports \(cbd.int\)](#)

Business for Nature [Speaking Points](#)

### Get in touch with our global community

Capitals Coalition Hubs - [Capitals Hubs – Capitals Coalition](#)

ICC World Chambers - [Our members - ICC - International Chamber of Commerce \(iccwbo.org\)](#)

WBCSD hubs - [Global Network \(wbczd.org\)](#)

Business for Nature partners - [NBSAP recommendations Annex — Business For Nature](#)

