

As was identified by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), we need ‘transformative change’ if we are to halt the continued loss of the biodiversity upon which natural systems, society and our economies depend. The reason that we need this fundamental, system-wide change is that the root cause of biodiversity loss is a ‘systems’ failure, arising from the way that biodiversity is treated in economic systems. This means that despite the work of conservation organisations and agencies on species, habitats and protected areas, we will not deliver our biodiversity goals unless biodiversity is ‘mainstreamed’ (integrated) into other sectors and policies, and in the economic systems that drive most decisions that currently impact biodiversity. This will require Parties to ensure there is cross-sectoral harmonisation of biodiversity-related policies and implementation within governments.

The challenges of doing this, in a global economic system which has always treated biodiversity as an externality (a cost or benefit not included in market prices), should not be underestimated.

**There are a number of ways that biodiversity mainstreaming could be improved in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including the following:**

- 1. Communicate the importance and value of nature.** This must emphasise to the public, governments, and businesses the underpinning of the SDGs by nature, and that a failure to value and conserve nature will impact wellbeing, livelihoods, national economies and ultimately our very survival. Without governments and businesses both understanding this, and being able to see that the public understands and demands it, they will not commit to the scale of change that is required.
- 2. Cross-sector planning.** To plan how we can achieve transformative change we need to bring business leaders, governments, civil society and academia together to develop a workable strategy. For this to work we need business leaders to be part of the strategic planning, not just making commitments for their own companies.
- 3. Planning at scale.** At a global level, this planning should be in partnership with business-supported platforms, such as the [Global Commons Alliance](#), [Business For Nature](#) and [Nature4Climate](#), which will be highly influential in accelerating action and mobilising uptake from the current innovators and early adopters to the majority of businesses and finally, through regulation and investor rejection, the laggards or ‘bad actors’, thus achieving the system-wide, transformative system change needed. At a national level, this can be through national business and biodiversity platforms as established by the CBD.
- 4. Improve targets, but focus on implementation.** More science-based, ‘SMART’ targets, underpinned by strong science, will be important, but require a clear strategy for implementation, including identification of relevant actors and priority actions, ensuring a means of delivering and tracking progress, and ultimately linking this to biodiversity trends.
- 5. Promote actions to address demand, and to collectively live within our means.** In parallel with the awareness and understanding covered above, we need to use economic and regulatory tools to move society towards sustainability.
- 6. For actions on the ground, take an ecosystem approach.** We need to understand how to work with, not against, natural systems in meeting societal needs in a sustainable way, and need to operationalise this through improved land use planning with strategic environmental assessments.
- 7. Shift from ‘good practice’ to ‘required practice’.** In line with the stated transformative action, we need to build on voluntary approaches that encourage ‘good practice’ adopted by a percentage of businesses, to a regulated system whereby all businesses are required to have a net positive impact, and pay for the ecosystem services they use. If these costs are internalised in the price that consumers pay it may have a short-term impact on price but should incentivise environmental efficiency, and ultimately reduce costs.
- 8. BirdLife’s contribution.** The BirdLife partnership will play a number of crucial roles in this, primarily in the identification of science-based targets and global policy, including helping facilitate multi-stakeholder strategic planning, active participation in national business and biodiversity platforms, and working directly with 3-4 priority sectors to pilot and test new approaches.

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<sup>1</sup> This overview paper is a work in progress and we welcome feedback or the opportunity to discuss these proposals as we develop further detail.

BirdLife International is the world's largest conservation partnership, with 115 national Partners, and is the pre-eminent international authority on bird conservation. BirdLife is the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species Authority mandated to collate and regularly update the extinction risk threat status of all birds globally.

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