

A BUSINESS GUIDE TO **THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

JUNE 2021



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) will take place in Kunming, China.¹ At this meeting, we hope nations agree to adopt a new Post-2020 Global Framework for Biodiversity (Post-2020 Framework). This framework is intended to include goals, targets and policy directions for our global society over the next three decades which will lead the way to achieving the CBD 2050 vision of “Living in Harmony with Nature”².

As was the case for the Paris Agreement on climate change, an ambitious, clear and implementable international agreement at COP15 will ensure that the nature agenda is raised to the highest political level. This would help set the direction for business action, and guide governments in adopting policies that unlock new business opportunities and create a level playing field and stable operating environment for businesses around the world. COP15, and the other key biodiversity events on the road to COP15, are opportunities for businesses to contribute to and shape the nature agenda for a resilient and sustainable future.

¹ Currently scheduled from 11-25 October 2021 but timing is likely to change due to COVID-19. The detailed modalities are still under discussion

² <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/0b54/1750/607267ea9109b52b750314a0/cop-14-09-en.pdf>

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1. INTRODUCTION

We are losing nature - The 2019 Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) [Global Assessment Report](#) warned that nature loss is accelerating at an unprecedented rate. Nearly 1 million species are at risk of extinction from human activities and 75% of the land surface has been significantly altered by human actions, with severe impacts for our livelihoods, economies, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.³

Nature loss is putting our economies at risk - According to the World Economic Forum, over half the world's total GDP – US\$44 trillion – is moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services and, as a result, exposed to risks from nature loss. At the same time, a nature-based transition could create US\$10 trillion in business opportunity and create 395 million jobs by 2030.

We must address this emergency now - The CBD COP15 is the most important UN Biodiversity Conference this decade and represents a unique opportunity for governments to agree an ambitious Post-2020 Framework that helps set humanity on course for achieving the CBD's 2050 vision of "Living in Harmony with Nature."

We can't solve climate change without nature as our ally - COVID-19 has demonstrated how interconnected everything is – nature, people, climate, health, food, finance and the economy. Nature-Based Solutions⁴ are at the center of the

"Thousands of businesses are already taking action for nature, but it's not enough. These challenges cannot be solved in isolation and leading companies are calling for governments to adopt policies now that will create a level playing field, a stable operating environment and unlock new business opportunities. An ambitious international agreement with clear and implementable targets is essential to help more businesses scale and speed up efforts to make the transition needed towards a sustainable, circular economy that respects the limits of the planet."

Eva Zabey, Executive Director, Business for Nature

strategy in helping to address climate change. An ambitious outcome at CBD COP15 will encourage governments to include Nature-Based Solutions in their climate action plans and long-term strategies.

Businesses have a critical role to play - Businesses must engage in the discussion and demonstrate support so we reach an international agreement that is ambitious, clear and implementable. Indeed, business played a crucial role in supporting the successful adoption of the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2015. Not only by making voluntary climate commitments before the conference but also by [being present and active](#) in the lead up to and at the conference itself.

³ IPBES (2019), Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>.

⁴ Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are defined by IUCN as "actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits", <https://www.iucn.org/commissions/commission-ecosystem-management/our-work/nature-based-solutions>.



2. WHAT IS BEING **DISCUSSED AT THE CBD** AND WHY IS IT **RELEVANT FOR BUSINESS?**

NEGOTIATION OF A **POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK**

The CBD is currently developing a new strategic framework to be adopted at COP15– the [Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (Post-2020 Framework).⁵

This will build on and replace the current [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020](#), which includes twenty time-bound and measurable targets, the [Aichi Biodiversity Targets](#) for protecting and conserving natural systems. Despite commitments by Parties and stakeholders, none of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets were achieved⁶ in full by 2020, and only six were even partially achieved. This is due to the lack of political willingness but also the over-abundance of targets and their lack of clarity, the lack of monitoring tools and the lack of financial resources.

The Post-2020 Framework must build on these lessons to create a transformative framework that sets the world on the path to reversing nature loss by 2030 and living in harmony with nature by 2050.

“Companies that have embraced the transition to green models can prosper, and even gain competitive advantage while showing vision and leadership. The time is now to act. We need to find common solutions to our problems by reimagining business models, redesigning value chains, addressing current flows and reaching the right level of ambition to reverse natural loss.”

Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary, CBD

WHY IS IT **RELEVANT FOR BUSINESS?**

The Post-2020 Framework will translate into actions, policies and regulations at regional and national levels that will have direct consequences on the operations of companies.

The key elements of the agreement will have an impact on how companies operate and how they can transform their business models. The agreement has the potential to unlock new business opportunities and will help create a level playing field and stable operating environment for business globally.

Business participation is essential to drive the agenda in a direction that is aligned with business expectations, experiences and realities, and is sufficiently ambitious to achieve the level of action the biodiversity crisis demands.

⁵ In the 2018 Sharm El Sheikh Declaration, the 196 Parties to the CBD committed to developing, through enhanced strategic collaboration and cooperation with non-State actors, an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

⁶ WBCSD Business summary of the Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 [available here](#)

WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS FOR THE POST-2020 FRAMEWORK FOR BUSINESS?

The Post-2020 Framework will include:

1. A mission for 2030: a global goal for nature

Current status – The current proposed mission does not reflect the ambition level needed to achieve the 2050 vision and must therefore be strengthened to simplify the nature agenda, guide investment decisions and ultimately provide direction for all.

How is this relevant for business? Long-term certainty is vital to encourage the uptake of nature-positive business models and to orient investments and business decision-making processes around the protection, restoration and sustainable use of nature and natural resources.

2. A clear role for businesses and financial institutions to act

Current status – The current targets are not yet adequately SMART or relevant enough for businesses and would trigger focus actions. They do not yet address the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, embody the correct level of ambition or focus on the key levers necessary for transformation.

How is this relevant for business? The private sector has the responsibility to co-lead the transformation needed to reverse nature loss by 2030. By adopting targets relevant and actionable by businesses, the Framework would enable businesses to play an active role in achieving the mission and goals.

3. An approach to mainstreaming nature in all decision making

Current status – The CBD is developing a Long-Term Approach to Mainstreaming strategy that identifies governments, financial institutions and civil society as the main actors to mainstream nature. The main recommendations of the strategy are not yet included in the framework, especially the need to give business a concrete role in the implementation of the framework.

How is this relevant for business? Mainstreaming nature should be made an essential element of the framework as policy coherence at global, national and local levels is essential to facilitate business action.

4. 2030 target on harmful incentives for biodiversity

Current status – The current draft of the Post-2020 Framework (Target 17) suggests redirecting, repurposing, reforming or eliminating incentives and subsidies harmful to biodiversity.

How is this relevant for business? Ending incentives and subsidies for harmful practices and implementing biodiversity positive incentives would support a level playing field for companies, therefore encouraging positive business action including sustainable use, resilience, restoration and circularity. The Post-2020 Framework could commit to the elimination of harmful subsidies and also 'redirect' them to incentivize sustainable practices.

5. Approaches to the mobilization of financial resources to ensure a successful implementation of the framework

Current status – This is a critical and difficult diplomatic issue being negotiated by countries. The current options being discussed include financing mechanisms involving businesses and transformation of subsidy frameworks.

How is it relevant for business? – Private sector has a key role to play by ensuring the financial flows are aligned with the objective of a nature positive world by 2030. It is therefore crucial for the Framework, in addition to tackling subsidies and generating new forms of green finance, to also ensure the greening of mainstream finance.

6. A potential extension of the access and benefit sharing obligations

Current status – A possible extension of access and benefit sharing (ABS) obligations to genetic sequences data ("digital sequence information") is being discussed and is one of the two 'make-or-break' issues in the negotiations. The Nagoya Protocol currently regulates access to physical genetic resources, and the sharing of benefits from R&D using these.⁷

How is this relevant for business? Extending these obligations to genetic resource sequence data could have a strong impact on private and public scientific research and innovation so it is essential for business to contribute to this discussion.

To learn more on why to engage on the CBD – read the publication [*"No business on a dead planet – why an ambitious Post-2020 Framework also makes economic sense"*](#).

⁷ ICC statement: "Digital Sequence Information and the Nagoya Protocol" and Joint stakeholder statement: "Promoting sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity through open exchange of Digital Sequence Information"



3. HOW DOES THE **CBD** WORK?

ABOUT THE **CONVENTION**

The Convention on Biological Diversity is an international legally binding treaty between 196 signatory countries (referred to as the Parties), that was concluded in 1992 to provide a global framework for action on biodiversity. It is one of the three Rio Conventions, alongside the UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) and UNCCD (UN Convention to Combat Desertification).

The CBD has three main goals:

- The **conservation** of biological diversity;
- The **sustainable use** of the components of biodiversity; and
- A **fair and equitable sharing** of benefits arising from the utilization⁸ of genetic resources.⁹

CONVENTION **PROTOCOLS**

In addition to the strategic frameworks being negotiated and adopted by the convention (i.e. the [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020](#) adopted in 2011 and the [Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) expected to be adopted at COP15 in 2021) that set the global ambition and strategy to achieve the three convention objectives, the CBD has two supplementary agreements – called Protocols.

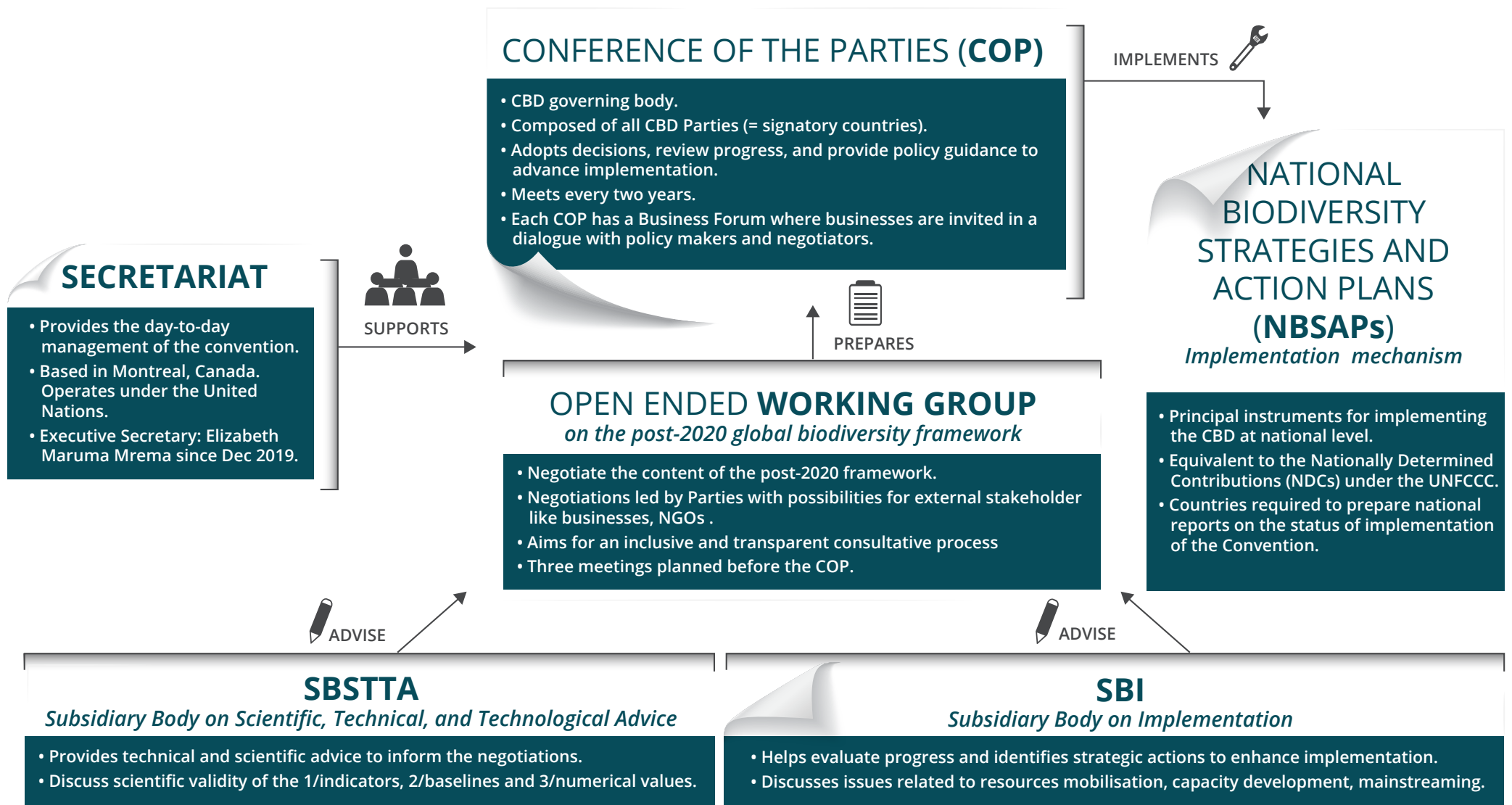
These protocols have an impact on business activities in the areas below:

- **Cross border movements of genetically modified organisms:** the **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety** (2003) governs the movements of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology from one country to another.
- **Use of genetic resources in R&D:** The **Nagoya Protocol** on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising (ABS) from their Utilization (2014) provides a framework for national regulation on modalities for accessing genetic resources and for sharing benefits arising from their utilization (primarily R&D), as well as on compliance by domestic users with ABS regulations in provider countries.

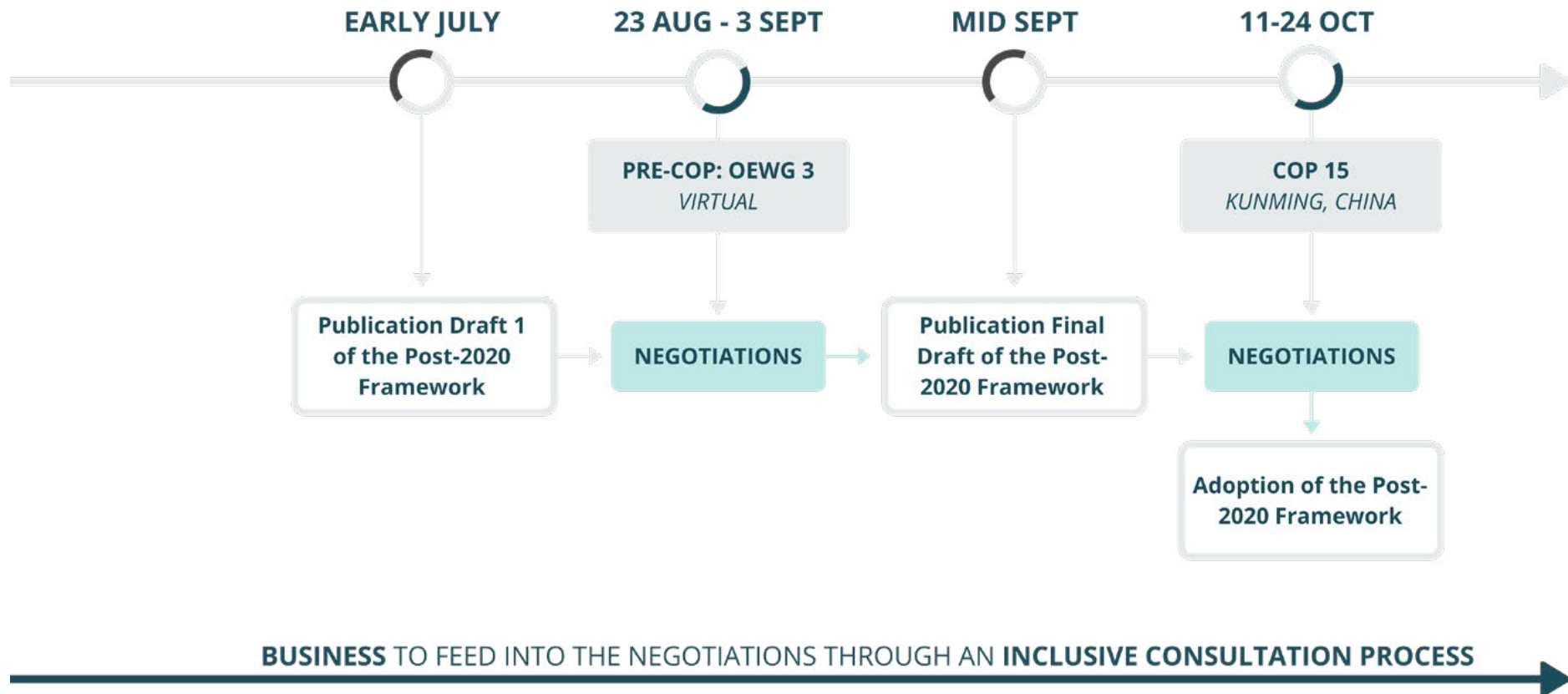
⁸ Article 2 Nagoya Protocol: "Utilization of genetic resources" means to conduct research and development on the genetic and/or biochemical composition of genetic resources, including through the application of biotechnology as defined in Article 2 of the Convention.

⁹ CBD Article 2: "Genetic resources" means genetic material of actual or potential value.

CONVENTION GOVERNANCE



PROCESS AND 2021 TIMELINE FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE POST-2020 BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK



WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT COP15 AND HOW CAN BUSINESS ENGAGE?

The CBD COP15 is currently scheduled to take place in Kunming, China on 11-24 October 2021. This is when the Post-2020 Global Framework for Biodiversity should be adopted by the CBD country signatories.

COP15 will consist of plenary meetings and working groups where Parties will negotiate the agreement. These meetings are open to Non-State Actors, including businesses, that are invited to attend and contribute to the discussions. There will also be a two-day **high-level segment** where Heads of State and Government and ministers will meet for final negotiations on the agreement.

In parallel to the official negotiations, the CBD secretariat is organizing eight official parallel forums, including a **Business and Biodiversity Forum**.

This will be a two-day event, organized back-to-back with the high-level segment, with the aim to have business-government dialogues and to bring business considerations into the negotiations.

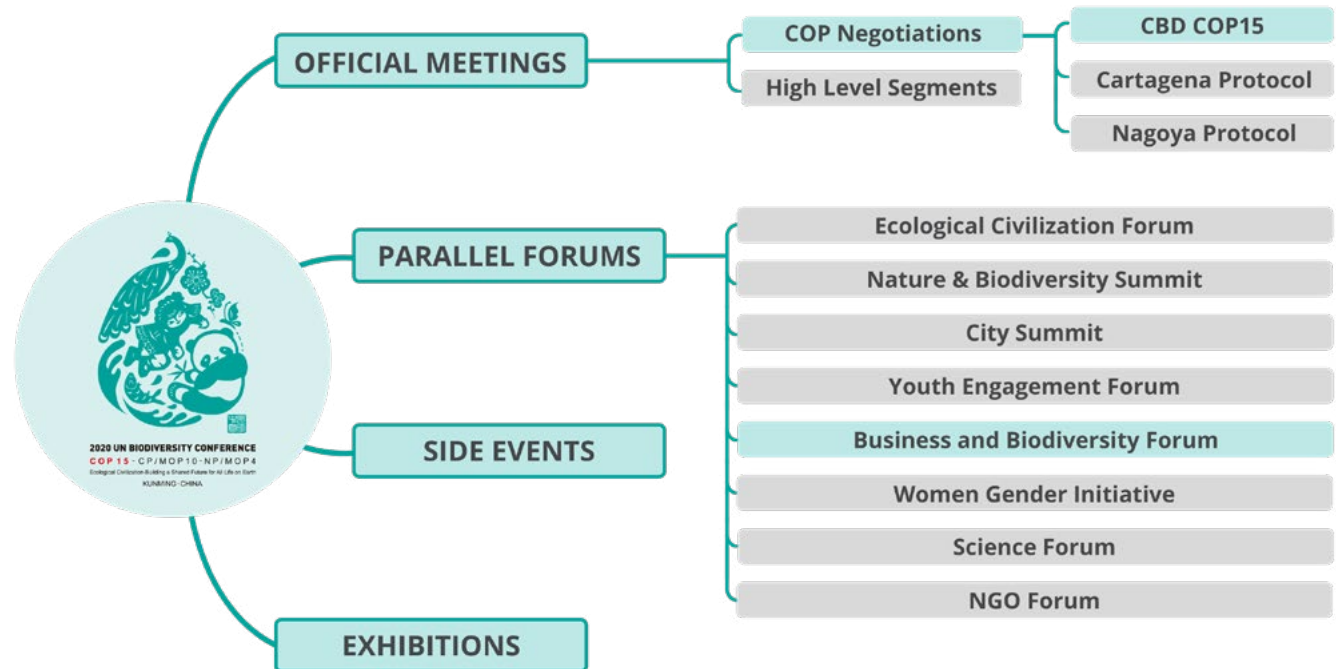
Side-events will also be organised where businesses can contribute to the discussions and share best-practices, alongside a technology fair.

COP14 launched the [Sharm El Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People](#) an online platform for all non-state actors to submit nature commitments. This Action Agenda is an opportunity for business to showcase their contributions to reversing nature loss ahead of COP15.

“Recent events have made very clear the importance of natural environments to the health and prosperity of communities, livelihoods and economies the world over. But effectively addressing the pressing challenge of increasing biodiversity loss in nature will require leadership and solutions that are both global and local, with all stakeholders stepping up. Biodiversity is good for business, and the private sector can and must help to protect, conserve and restore our ecosystems. In partnership with Business for Nature, ICC will work to unite global business behind these critical efforts.”

John WH Denton AO, Secretary General, International Chamber of Commerce

OFFICIAL EVENTS AT CBD COP15



4. HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE?



1. Sign up to the Nature is Everyone's Business Call to Action:

- join 700 other companies call of policies now to reverse nature loss in this decade and demonstrate the business momentum

2. Advocate by calling for a transformative Post-2020 Framework

- support Business for Nature policy recommendations.
- encourage Parties to strengthen the Post-2020 Framework by adopting Business for Nature 9 suggestions on the draft.
- express interest in joining Business for Nature technical advocacy work.

3. Attend events to demonstrate that nature is a business priority:

- **Contribute to preparatory COP15 events** (see timeline on page 8) physically or virtually. Save-the-date of key meetings and contact Business for Nature about how you can join us at these meetings and make your voice heard.
- **Attend COP15 and the Business and Biodiversity Forum** (see page 8) to contribute to the business-government dialogue.

4. Action steps to become nature positive

- Assess your impacts and dependencies on nature to ensure you are committing and acting on the most material ones.
- Commit to ambitious goals and set science-based targets that put your company on the right track towards operating within the Earth's limit.
- Act now to avoid, reduce, regenerate and restore and transform.

Learn more about each of these steps on [Business for Nature's website](#).

ANNEX

BEYOND THE CBD: **KEY MILESTONE EVENTS ON THE ROAD TO COP15**

To ensure a successful outcome at the COP15, nature must be elevated to the top of the international agenda.

The following events are essential moments to mobilize businesses and other stakeholders to demonstrate the business case for nature and encourage CBD Parties to adopt a framework that puts the world on track to reverse nature loss by 2030.



THE LINKS BETWEEN **NATURE** AND **CLIMATE CHANGE**

One of the targets in the current draft of the Post-2020 Framework is “increase contributions to climate change mitigation adaption and disaster risk reduction from nature-based solutions and ecosystems based approaches, ensuring resilience and minimizing any negative impacts on biodiversity”.

At the United Nations climate negotiations in 2019, a growing number of governments, businesses and civil society groups noted the important role of Nature-Based Solutions¹⁰ in helping to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. Nature-Based Solutions are a fundamental part of action on biodiversity but also climate action, and can help enhance climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as support sustainable development.

An ambitious outcome at CBD COP15 could help to support an ambitious outcome at the next climate negotiations and encourage governments to include Nature-Based Solutions in their climate action plans and long-term strategies.

¹⁰ Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are defined by IUCN as “actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”, <https://www.iucn.org/commissions/commission-ecosystem-management/our-work/nature-based-solutions>.

ESSENTIAL READS

- [Business for Nature Policy Recommendations](#)
- [Business for Nature Inputs on the Zero Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#)
- [ICC Policy Paper on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#)
- [ICC Comments on the Zero Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#)
- [ICC Policy Paper on Digital Sequence Information and Benefit Sharing](#)
- [A Comprehensive Overview of Global Biodiversity Finance, OECD](#)
- [Tracking Economic Instruments and Finance for Biodiversity, OECD](#)
- [Nature Risk Rising - New Nature Economy Report, World Economic Forum](#)
- [The Future of Nature and Business – New Nature Economy Report II, World Economic Forum](#)
- [Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, IPBES](#)
- [Indebted to Nature: Exploring biodiversity risks for the Dutch financial sector](#)
- [WWF's Living Planet Report 2020: Bending the curve of biodiversity loss](#)
- [WWF Global Futures report](#)
- [WWF Nature is too big to fail report](#)
- [Financing Nature: Closing the Global Biodiversity Financing Gap, The Nature Conservancy](#)
- [Leaders' Pledge for Nature](#)
- [CBD Global Biodiversity Assessment 5](#)

This publication was developed by Business for Nature in collaboration with the International Chamber of Commerce. It will be updated as further details are available.

BUSINESS FOR NATURE

Business for Nature is a global coalition launched in 2019 that brings together influential organizations and forward-thinking businesses to unite the network of business initiatives for nature.

The coalition is made up of more than 50 partner organizations, including the World Economic Forum, WWF, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the International Chamber of Commerce and many more international, national and sectoral organizations. We also have a Strategic Advisory Group comprised of representatives from forward-thinking businesses who guide Business for Nature's work. Together, the coalition demonstrates credible business leadership and amplifies a powerful business voice calling for governments to reverse nature loss.

Business for Nature is the main Focal Point for Business in the discussions on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. To find out more about how to engage ahead and at COP15 please contact Maelle.pelisson@businessfornature.org

INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is the institutional representative of more than 45 million companies in over 100 countries. ICC's core mission is to make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere. Our members include many of the world's leading companies, SMEs, business associations and local chambers of commerce. ICC is actively engaged in discussions at the CBD on ABS and digital sequencing and is a founding member of Business for Nature coalition. ICC is mobilizing business to take action to reverse nature loss and stands ready to support countries to secure an ambitious Post-2020 Framework at COP15. ICC is also the official Focal Point for Business and Industry at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and is the only private sector organization to have Permanent Observer status at the United Nations General Assembly.

ICC is the main Focal Point for Business in the discussions on ABS and the Nagoya Protocol – to find out more about how to engage on ABS and Nagoya Protocol issues, please contact [Daphne Yong-d'Hervé](#), Director, Peace and Prosperity, ICC.

