

Working Group on Biodiversity

Terms of Reference

Background

While biodiversity has generally been less visible on the international agenda than climate change, its profile has increased over the past few years for both businesses and policy makers. This has been in part due to the current negotiations over a new Global Biodiversity Framework setting biodiversity targets for the next decade under the umbrella of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), more vocal support for the biodiversity agenda by the leadership of several large companies, as well as the recognition of the central role of biodiversity in efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

In comparison with climate change, companies are generally much less likely to explicitly address biodiversity in their sustainability strategies than they would be for climate change. They are often less familiar with issues surrounding biodiversity and lack the tools, data and expertise necessary to take biodiversity considerations into account in their strategies and operations.

The increasing visibility of biodiversity, the strong interlinkages with climate change, the ultimate dependence of all businesses – to varying degrees – on natural resources and healthy ecosystems, and the potential impact of the biodiversity negotiations on business, all argue for companies to focus more attention to biodiversity-related policy and other developments.

ICC has been contributing to the CBD discussions for several years but has until now focused mainly on the issue of access and benefit sharing in relation to genetic resources (ABS), the third pillar of the CBD. In the context of the discussions leading up to CBD COP-15, ICC has also been working with its partners through the Business for Nature¹ coalition to help secure an ambitious Post-2020 Framework and highlight the role of business in helping deliver solutions that will effectively address the challenges of biodiversity loss and promote sustainable use of the world's biological resources.

To help its members gain a better understanding of the biodiversity issues which may impact businesses, and to enable a more holistic approach to the role of business in the context of biodiversity, ICC will be setting up a working group to explore a broader set of issues being addressed within the CBD and other biodiversity fora. This will build on its previous work with the CBD and other biodiversity fora in the context of its work on ABS, and its existing partnerships in this area e.g. through the Business for Nature coalition.

Objectives

The aims of the working group are to:

- Act as a forum for exchange of information, views and knowledge on policy developments relating to biodiversity, with a particular focus on the current CBD negotiations;
- Identify specific issues of relevance to companies;

¹ [Business for Nature](https://www.businessfornature.org/) is a global umbrella coalition calling for action to reverse nature loss and restore the planet's vital natural systems – <https://www.businessfornature.org/> -

- Explore how ICC can address these issues as appropriate.

Composition of the working group

- Working group members are invited from the ICC membership at large including the Environment and Energy Commission and the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) task force.
- Efforts shall be made to ensure that different sectoral and geographical perspectives are represented in the working group to promote a richer exchange and a broad perspective.

Methodology

The working group will meet virtually on a regular basis to receive briefings, exchange views and information, and will coordinate closely with the ICC Commission on Environment and Energy and the ICC Task Force on ABS.

Timeframe

The working group will start to meet before end 2021 and continue until the end of CBD COP-15, after which its mandate will be reviewed to recalibrate the focus of its work.