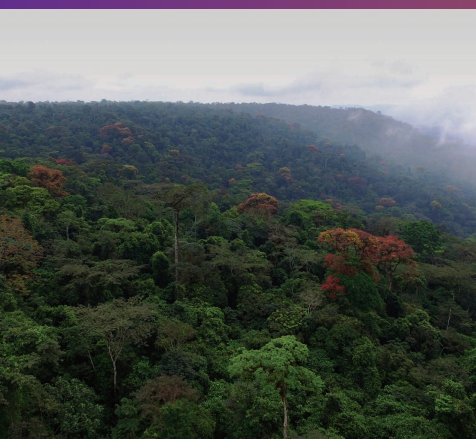




Advancing action on nature through business platforms

Selected case studies

Hélène Marre, Ann Moey and Nadine McCormick



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

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In Viet Nam, Ha Long Bay Cat Ba Alliance: Ms Bich Hien Nguyen, Programme Officer, IUCN Viet Nam, and Mr Jake Brunner, Head, IUCN Indo-Burma Group.

Executive summary

Engaging with business is vital for moving towards a more sustainable future. The private sector not only has a critical role to play in determining how natural resources are used, conserved and restored, but it can help lead the way through innovation, influence and outreach. Business and biodiversity platforms are key mechanisms that can facilitate engagement, strengthening learning and action with like-minded peers in the business and conservation community.

This paper examines nine different business and biodiversity platforms from across the IUCN network. While all of these examples have an overarching common goal to help companies understand their impacts and dependencies on nature, and to provide a collaborative setting for sharing knowledge and best practices, each of the cases highlighted also have had their own unique origins, characteristics and challenges. This study aims to explore the benefits and challenges associated with these initiatives, so others undertaking this journey can be inspired and learn from these experiences.

In particular, this paper shares key lessons from: five platforms in Asia – Leaders for Nature (LfN) India, Karachi Conservation in Pakistan, Biodiversity Sri Lanka, B-DNA in Thailand and Ha Long Bay Cat Ba Alliance in Viet Nam; two platforms in Africa – the Businesses in Environmental Stewardship Network (BESNet) in Ghana and the National Biodiversity and Business Network (NBBN) in South Africa; and two in Europe – the Entreprises et Biodiversite in France and Leaders for Nature (LfN) Netherlands.

Building and maintaining effective business and biodiversity platforms takes work. From establishing common objectives and governance structures, to ensuring sufficient funding and membership engagement – all of these elements are important to ensure successful outcomes. These platforms are not a panacea or an opportunity for greenwashing. However, as the study shows, they provide a safe space to advance awareness on the links between nature and business; and, when run effectively, they have the potential to accelerate meaningful conservation action and partnerships.



Photo: © IUCN Viet Nam.

Briefing the business sector in Viet Nam

1 Background of the study

The private sector plays a critical role in determining how biodiversity is used and conserved. Business and biodiversity platforms help companies understand their relationship with the natural environment, and offer support to address sustainability issues within and beyond their operations. The platforms also harness the innovation, insights and resources offered by member companies, to create comprehensive solutions to local and national problems.

IUCN's BioBiz Exchange initiative aims to empower civil society organisations (CSOs) to engage more effectively with businesses. The initiative recognises the potential important role of business and biodiversity platforms in countries where companies are not currently active around biodiversity issues. Initial scoping showed that some countries, particularly in Africa, are interested in establishing such platforms.

2 Objectives and target audience

To help fast track the successful set-up of business and biodiversity-type networks, IUCN undertook a study with the following objectives:

- Identify existing and/or emerging business and biodiversity platforms led by IUCN and/or IUCN Members across several regions including their overall objective, activities, governance structure and membership recruitment strategies;
- Determine critical success factors for establishing and maintaining and potentially ending such platforms including critical roles played by different types of actors;
- Define the barriers and challenges related to establishing and maintaining platforms;
- Explore areas for collaboration and knowledge exchange amongst platforms with the aim of generating more impact through unified action.

The study is targeted at IUCN country and project offices as well as IUCN Members and conservation partners interested in establishing business and biodiversity platforms in their respective countries.

3 Methodology

IUCN's Regional Office in Asia produced a compendium of platforms that have been established in the region, and included critical success factors and challenges for establishing and maintaining these platforms for internal purposes. Some of the information captured in the compendium was obtained from an IUCN workshop on business engagement in Asia held in July 2018.

Recognising the potential these business and biodiversity platforms have on influencing businesses, the IUCN Global Business and Biodiversity Programme (BBP) requested IUCN Asia to expand the geographical scope of the compendium and conduct research on four identified non-Asian platforms led by IUCN and/or IUCN Members in Africa and in Europe. IUCN Asia developed a set of questions in collaboration with the BBP. Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the different regions via Skype with follow-up via email in 2019. The interviewees included platform managers and/or key people involved in the establishment and maintenance of these platforms. A full list of the interviewees can be found in the Acknowledgements section.

4 Geographical coverage

All platforms identified for the study were based on the knowledge and relationships that BBP had within the IUCN network. The platforms presented variations in their governance structures, membership strategies and activities. Together, these initiatives provide useful and inspiring examples for IUCN and its conservation partners who may be considering establishing similar platforms in other regions.

4.1 Africa

The study also covers two platforms that are currently operational in Africa: the Businesses in Environmental Stewardship Network (BESNet) (Ghana) and the National Biodiversity and Business Network (South Africa). Other platforms are either being established or are only in the planning phase, so are not included in this study.

4.2 Asia

The study includes five platforms that currently operate in Asia, two of which have been recently established: Thailand Bio-Diversity Network Alliance (B-DNA) and Karachi Conservation (Pakistan). The others are more established and include LfN India, Biodiversity Sri Lanka and Ha Long–Cat Ba Alliance (HLCBA) (Viet Nam). At the time of publication, at least one other platform was being established in Viet Nam.

4.3 Europe

In Europe, two platforms were selected for this study. Entreprises & Biodiversité (France) is operational, while the LfN Netherlands platform was active from 2006 until 2016, making it the oldest business and biodiversity platform featured in this study.

Table 1 presents an overview of the platforms by region.

Table 1 — An overview of the geographical coverage of the study, by region

NAME OF PLATFORM	OPERATIONAL YEAR(S)	MAIN OBJECTIVE	MAIN ACTIVITIES	GOVERNANCE
Businesses in Environmental Stewardship Network Ghana	2017	To facilitate participation of the private sector in actions towards safeguarding Atewa Forest Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building Field visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making body: Joint decision-making by members Advisory body: None Secretariat: A Rocha Ghana
National Biodiversity and Business Network South Africa	2013	To assist businesses from various sectors to integrate and mainstream biodiversity issues into their strategies and operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building Research activities Development of tools for the private sector Annual forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making body: Steering Committee made of members Advisory body: None Secretariat: EWT
Leaders for Nature India	Since 2013	To shift towards a sustainable, green economy in India	Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making body: LfN India Advisory body: Members Secretariat: IUCN India
Karachi Conservation Pakistan	2017	To strengthen the engagement of the private sector in biodiversity conservation in Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising Field visits Research activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making body: Steering Committee Advisory body: Advisory Committee Secretariat: IUCN Pakistan
Biodiversity Sri Lanka	2012*	To strengthen the involvement of the private sector in biodiversity conservation in Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building Collaborative projects Technical support Project support Awards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making body: Board of Directors Advisory body: None Independent Secretariat: Hosted by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in the formative years
Thailand B-DNA	2018 – soft launch	To strengthen the private sector's role in nature conservation in Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building Awareness raising Collaborative projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making body: Steering Committee (Toyota + IUCN + member company) Advisory body: Advisory Committee Secretariat: IUCN Thailand and IUCN ARO
Ha Long Bay Cat Ba Alliance Viet Nam	First phase: 2014–2017 Second phase: 2017–2019	To build a partnership between stakeholders to preserve Ha Long Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building Awareness raising Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making body: Alliance Leadership Committee Advisory body: None Secretariat: IUCN Viet Nam
Entreprises & Biodiversité France	2009	To create a space for private sector partners of IUCN National Committee of France to exchange and work on common studies and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building Enhancing multi-stakeholders dialogue Development of tools and guidelines for the private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making body: Working Group representatives and Elected Bureau of IUCN National Committee of France Advisory body: IUCN National Committee of France (members) Secretariat: IUCN National Committee of France
Leaders for Nature Netherlands	2006–2016	To engage large companies and multinationals to deliver on sustainability commitments and integrate Natural Capital in their core operations	Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making body: Steering Committee made of members Advisory body: IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands Secretariat: IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands



Photo: © CBD Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity

Critical success factors and challenges for setting-up and operating platforms vary across different stages of the platform, such as the set-up stage (0–2 years) and the operational stage (2–3 years and onwards). These critical success factors and challenges have been further classified under four interconnected main themes:

- Enabling environment: external factors, e.g. political, societal, environmental influencing the set-up and operations of platforms;
- Financial sustainability: factors related to the financing of platforms;
- Strategic steps: factors related to the competitive strategy of platforms including governance structure, value proposition, recruitment and marketing;
- People and development: factors related to human, learning and development components.

5 Setting up a business and biodiversity platform: critical success factors in the early years

As the concept of establishing platforms as a way to engage business in nature conservation has emerged, critical success factors for Business and Biodiversity platforms have been identified, including the following:

5.1 Enabling environment

5.1.1 Responding to societal demand

The government's and civil society's interest in sustainability and nature is an important factor for the set-up of a business and biodiversity platform.

LfN Netherlands, for example, emerged from a societal and corporate movement to bring nature onto the political agenda at a time when concepts, such as 'natural capital', were non-existent. In another example, **BESNet** was initially set-up when local advocacy groups campaigned for the need to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the Atewa Forest Reserve in Ghana. The scope of BESNet has since broadened beyond advocacy for Atewa Forest Reserve to businesses developing and implementing sustainability strategies that enhance ecosystem health and functions while providing relevant goods and services for businesses. In South Africa, **NBBN** was established after receiving strong political support from the Department of Environmental Affairs.

5.1.2 Aligning with existing national and international targets to frame the platform's objectives

Aligning the platform's goals and objectives around key national and international frameworks, targets and commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Aichi Biodiversity Targets, is key as it allows the private sector to understand the importance of the platform and to have the opportunity to contribute to national and global biodiversity and environmental goals. This motivates platform stakeholders to remain committed to the cause.

B-DNA, for example, has aligned its overall objective with the SDGs and Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as Thailand's biodiversity goals (National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, NBSAP).¹ In South Africa, the goals of **NBBN** at the time of its creation were aligned with the country's Department of Environmental Affairs'

¹ For further information, please see: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/th/th-nbsap-v4-en.pdf>

National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES),² a national strategy meant to 'guide the sustainable growth of wildlife and bioprospecting industries.

5.2 Financial sustainability

5.2.1 Securing adequate seed funding

Establishing and maintaining platforms for the first couple of years requires adequate seed funding, while maintaining platforms beyond the first three years requires a sustainable financing model to ensure that the platform can continue to operate once the seed funding has been exhausted. It is important to take this into consideration early in the set-up stage and not wait until the end of the funding cycle. The following are examples of how platforms have secured adequate seed funding for the establishment of platforms:

- Membership fees: collection of an annual and/or one-off joining fee from companies (**NBBN, South Africa**);
- Contribution from existing private sector partnerships (**Entreprises & Biodiversité, France**);
- Conceptualise and implement projects with a private sector engagement component (**BESNet, Ghana**);
- Contribution from private and/or public donors, such as the case of the following platforms:
 - **LfN Netherlands** received seed funding from the Ministry of Economy as well as companies, while **LfN India** received seed funding from the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands via a strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in partnership with Hivos, a Dutch development organisation;
 - **NBBN** received seed funding from the South African Department of Environmental Affairs;
 - **Biodiversity Sri Lanka** received seed funding from Dilmah Conservation;
 - **HLCBA** (Viet Nam) received seed funding from US Agency for International Development (USAID);
 - **Karachi Conservation** (Pakistan) received seed funding from IUCN's Mangroves for the Future Programme for its first roundtables as well as from its founding members;
 - **B-DNA** received seed funding from Toyota Motor Thailand.

2 For further information, please see: <https://www.environment.gov.za/sites/default/files/reports/nationalbiodiversityeconomystategy.pdf>

5.3 Strategic steps

5.3.1 Engaging diverse perspectives on governance bodies

The involvement and engagement of government and non-governmental representatives in the governance of platforms is key in building credibility and allows for a wide range of perspectives to be heard and taken into consideration. The following are examples of how platforms have engaged other stakeholders:

- **B-DNA (Thailand), NBBN (South Africa) and Biodiversity Sri Lanka** indicated that the inclusion of government representatives in their governance structure was a key milestone for platform development and credibility enhancement;
- **B-DNA (Thailand), LfN Netherlands, LfN India, HLCBA (Viet Nam), Entreprises & Biodiversité (France) and Biodiversity Sri Lanka** are platforms created and/or hosted by IUCN or IUCN Committees. Through the neutral convening role of IUCN, these platforms formally involved NGOs in their respective governance systems. Additionally, **B-DNA (Thailand)** invited two universities to join its Advisory Committee with the intention of including academic perspectives on the platform. Similarly, **LfN Netherlands**, invited the President of Utrecht University to join its Steering Committee, which provides guidance for the platform's strategic direction.

5.3.2 Establishing a governance structure in early stages

In the very early stages of establishment, most platforms have set-up a governance structure, which includes a number of governance aspects as outlined in Table 2.

5.3.3 Harnessing existing networks to recruit initial members

Encourage members to join at the very beginning can be challenging. In order to identify a first champion company and build a critical mass in terms of membership for the platform, it is more effective to harness existing partnerships and senior management's networks. Through the wide network of IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands, **LfN Netherlands** was able to reach out and influence a large number of corporates, establishing its base to attract other large Dutch companies.

5.3.4 Joining global networks to obtain official recognition, and share information and best practices

Both **NBBN (South Africa)** and **Biodiversity Sri Lanka** joined The Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity under the Convention for Biological Diversity,³ which magnified their official recognition by their respective governments as national biodiversity and business platforms.

³ For further information, please see: <https://www.cbd.int/business/gp.shtml>

Table 2 — Overview of typical governance structure aspects found across the sample group of business platforms

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE	ROLE
Decision-making body	The decision-making body has the authority to approve, approve with conditions, or deny any decision, direction, activities or projects related to the platform. It is usually comprised of platform members, initiating partners as well as donors and/or advisors to the platform. Most platforms have set-up a Steering Committee to act as the platform's decision-making body.
Advisory body	<p>In addition to a decision-making body, some platforms, such as Thailand Bio-Diversity Network Alliance (B-DNA) and Karachi Conservation (Pakistan), have also established or are in the process of establishing a formal advisory body to enhance the platform's credibility. The advisory body advises the platform on technical and operational matters and may be comprised of government officers, NGO representatives, academics and others.</p> <p>The advisory committees can also evolve to take into account changing stakeholders in the network. For example, until 2017, LfN India had an oversight from the Steering Committee whose membership consisted of the founding members. Since July 2016, LfN India is independent of LfN Netherlands and in 2020, LfN India has an advisory committee that is made up of its current membership and other invited members/organisations.</p>
Secretariat	The secretariat handles day-to-day communications with members, coordinates with the advisory body (if any) and the decision-making body, and performs day-to-day tasks related to the platform. For most of platforms featured in this study, the secretariat is hosted by IUCN. On the other hand, one of the platform's initiating partners, Biodiversity Sri Lanka's secretariat, was hosted by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce for several years.
In-company focal points	Most companies on platforms nominate two to four focal points, usually a mix of senior and junior staff, to engage in platform activities and liaise with senior management. These focal points often work in the sustainability or environmental affairs department.
Platform partners/ supporters	Many of the platforms formally involve IUCN Members and/or other NGOs in their activities either as advisors or as partners. Other platforms seek external support based on their needs and activities they undertake. Businesses in Environmental Stewardship Network (BESNet) (Ghana) , for example, partnered with advocacy groups to develop awareness-raising material on the Atewa Forest Range.



Photo: © Kajeewan Wichian.

Mangrove planting day in partnership with JW Marriott in Thailand

5.3.5 Working with influential companies that can act as ‘champions’ for the platform

Working with large multinationals and influential companies and convincing them to promote the platform is key to increasing the visibility and building the credibility of the platform.

For example, IUCN Asia/Thailand collaborated with Toyota, a global IUCN partner and multinational car manufacturing company, to establish **B-DNA**. As a result, all Toyota Group companies and key suppliers in Thailand joined the platform.

In India, **LfN India** actively recruited companies with a relatively green profile for this programme first, such as TATA Steel Limited, TATA Power and the Aditya Birla Group, to name a few, thus attracting other large Indian companies in the process.

5.3.6 Providing added value by addressing a specific need

It is important for platforms to develop a unique selling proposition based on gaps and opportunities. All the platforms featured in this study were established to address a specific need at the time of their establishment. Below are some examples:

- **Entreprises & Biodiversité (France)** was the first platform in the country to involve NGOs and companies in protecting and conserving biodiversity. At that time, there was another operational platform, which was private sector-led but without NGO involvement;
- **B-DNA (Thailand)** was the first platform in the country to focus on nature conservation. When it was established, the country also had another business platform – the Thailand Business Council for Sustainable Development (TBCSD) – but it focused on sustainability in general;
- **LfN India** adapted its strategy to allow its platform to complement and learn from the activities implemented by its members.

While most platforms in this study have a national focus, two focus on specific areas within their country of operations. **BESNet (Ghana)** was established to engage the private sector in protecting the Atewa Forest Range in Ghana, while **HLCBA (Viet Nam)** aims to engage the private sector in the conservation and protection of the World Heritage Site of Ha Long Bay as well as the Cat Ba Archipelago.

5.3.7 Conducting thorough due diligence, increasing accountability and recruiting the right members and partners

Business engagement carries significant risk and opportunity for all platform stakeholders. Undertaking thorough due diligence on potential members has proven to be very positive for membership/partnership-based platforms such as **LfN India** and **LfN Netherlands**, **B-DNA (Thailand)** and **Entreprises & Biodiversité (France)**, as it allowed for harmonious relationships to be formed among members and between members and the secretariat.

Several platforms also integrated a charter or pledge as a membership requirement to hold companies accountable. **LfN India** and **LfN Netherlands** require all members to sign a Declaration/Charter highlighting steps to integrate natural capital into company operations. While such pledges are non-binding, these are thought to effectively encourage behaviour change still not adapted to all contexts. Integrating charters and pledges was also considered by platforms, such as **NBBN (South Africa)** and **B-DNA (Thailand)** however, it was not pursued. In the case of **B-DNA**, platform members were concerned about public opinion if they could not meet the targets highlighted in the pledge.

In France, **Entreprises & Biodiversité (France)** only accepts membership from existing private sector partners of IUCN National Committee of France, so they are familiar with each other's activities and commitment levels. The platform provides them with an opportunity to work on special group projects around common biodiversity interests.

6 Ensuring the sustainability of the platform: critical success factors in the operational stage

As a business and biodiversity platform starts to settle into an operational routine typically from around the second year onwards, the critical success factors for successfully maintaining them include the following:

6.1 Financial sustainability

6.1.2 Developing sustainable financing models

The following are examples of how platforms have developed sustainable financing to ensure that the platform can continue to operate once seed funding has been exhausted:

- Collecting annual membership fees. Six out of the nine platforms in this study collect membership fees. This indicates that this is the most common financing model for sustaining operations;
- Securing funding from private sector partnerships (**Entreprises & Biodiversité, France**);
- Raising funds (in addition to annual membership fees) through:
 - Project conceptualisation, on-demand technical assistance and technical training as well as coordination and facilitation expertise (**Biodiversity Sri Lanka**);
 - Provision of fee-based consulting services (**NBBN, South Africa**), who developed biodiversity indicators and a biodiversity mainstreaming strategy for one of the members);
 - Collection of attendance fees when hosting learning events (**Biodiversity Sri Lanka** and **NBBN, South Africa**).

6.2 Strategic steps

6.2.1 Identifying and increasing added value with a focus on flexibility and ability to evolve

Most platforms have a well-defined strategy and objectives. However, it is their ability to be flexible and adapt to ever-changing environments and trends that has been key to sustaining their future.

- For example, after its Advisory Committee made a recommendation to focus on tackling plastic pollution, **B-DNA (Thailand)** organised a coastal clean-up to raise awareness about the issue. While the activity had not been included in the

initial work plan, the platform still implemented it. It proved to be a huge success, especially in terms of raising the profile of the platform, as plenty of media covered the event, and was also widely supported by all members and Advisory Committee members.

- In South Africa, after a decline in membership in 2018, **NBBN (South Africa)** undertook a strategic review in 2019 to revisit the membership strategy and member value proposition.
- **Biodiversity Sri Lanka** started as a programme of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, with Dilmah Conservation and IUCN as initiating partners. The platform gained legal recognition in October 2015, as a Not-for-Profit Company Limited by Guarantee under the Company's Ordinance of Sri Lanka. Starting as Sri Lanka Business and Biodiversity Platform (SLBBP) in 2012, the platform underwent rebranding and was relaunched as Biodiversity Sri Lanka – its current name. As an independent entity, the platform was able to further build its credibility, hence appealing to more corporate partners.

6.3 People and development

6.3.1 Maintaining commitment from the coordination team and founding partners throughout the platform lifecycle

In addition to financial resources, adequate human resources skills are required to ensure effective operations and functions.

Every platform identified in this study had a strong and committed team to handle day-to-day management and operations of the platform during the establishment phase, and to lead the platform's activities once the platform was established. Most platforms noted that without the strong commitments of initiating partners and coordination teams, they probably would not have been successful in the long-term.

6.3.2 Recognising the benefits of collaboration through platforms

Collaboration among platform key stakeholders, by pulling resources, knowledge and ideas, is key to addressing complex environmental and sustainability challenges.

Most platforms regularly organise joint events and/or capacity building activities to ensure that knowledge is shared among members. Some platforms also propose collaborative project ideas for joint investment, such as **Biodiversity Sri Lanka**, **B-DNA (Thailand)** (in progress). It is extremely important for platforms to engage members on a regular basis in order for fruitful collaboration, and ultimately positive impact on the environment, to ensue.

7 Challenges in the early years

While all platforms investigated in this study have been operating successfully, as can be realistically expected, some challenges have occurred. The challenges have been grouped together and some specific examples provided, where relevant, to support others if faced with similar challenges when setting-up such initiatives.

7.1 Financial sustainability

7.1.1 Making the business case for conservation

Several platforms have indicated that demonstrating the value of investing in environmental initiatives and/or biodiversity conservation can be difficult because companies are more inclined to focus on other types of initiatives that are often perceived to be more visible and pressing issues, as in the case of climate-change adaptation and water-related initiatives of **NBBN (South Africa)**.

Companies might be more inclined to either not join business and biodiversity platforms or join general sustainability-related initiatives and/or non-fee based initiatives, as noted by **LfN India** and **B-DNA (Thailand)**.

7.1.2 Obtaining sufficient financial resources to set-up the platform

Several platforms noted that despite seed funding, they had insufficient funding to kick-off platform activities. IUCN Pakistan, for example, noted that simultaneous pursuit of bilateral engagements and multilateral engagements was key to raising funds for **Karachi Conservation (Pakistan)**. Unfortunately, they were not able to really pursue this fundraising approach due to limited human and financial resources.

7.2 People and development

7.2.1 Engaging human resources to build the platform's visibility, network and recruitment

LfN Netherlands noted that they had to dedicate important resources to maintain interest and engagement from companies, including organising events and annual/bi-annual face-to-face meetings with all members. The platform noted that it would have not been possible to organise these activities without the support of external partners.

LfN India, while also voicing similar views as **LfN Netherlands** in terms of dedicated human resources and technical expertise, also highlighted that they leveraged the expertise available within the IUCN Membership and IUCN Commissions to implement many of its capacity-building activities.

8 Challenges in the operational years

As a platform becomes more operational, the challenges shift from those experienced in the nascent years. The following are common challenges that the platforms faced after the set-up phase:

8.1 Strategic steps

8.1.1 Striking a balance between engagement and on-the-ground impact

- While most platforms have clear objectives, establishing a long-term timeline for the platform, delivering on commitments and achieving results can be difficult. **Karachi Conservation (Pakistan)** felt that it was difficult to build private sector ownership of the platform.
- **B-DNA (Thailand)**, **NBBN (South Africa)** and **LfN Netherlands** mentioned the difficulty for secretariat and other governance bodies to maintain engagement and interest of members while focusing on developing meaningful projects and activities (such as capacity building sessions) for the platform.
- **LfN Netherlands** attempted to develop collaborative projects. However, this did not concretise, creating a feeling of ‘lack of impact’. The platform was criticised for allowing a certain degree of greenwashing to take place.



IUCN speaking at South Africa's Indaba

8.2 People and development

8.2.1 Ensuring effective collaboration and building consensus among platform members

Several platforms have expressed that managing the expectations of a broad range of members can be challenging as the members have different interests and priorities, and may sometimes put their interests and needs ahead of others. This sometimes leads to tension and conflict among members. On some occasions, one or several companies had been particularly assertive and insisted for their demands to be met. As a result, other companies were rather intimidated, and the dynamics of the platform shifted.

The high turnover rate of focal points – from one position to another or from one company to another – can be detrimental to continuous progression of platforms. For example, **LfN Netherlands** and **BESNet (Ghana)** noted the importance of building strong relationships with focal points. To help tackle the issue, handover procedures might need to be planned in case of staff resignation, reassignment or retirement to ensure that the platform is able to operate continuously.

At least two platforms noted the difficulty to create a space for minority sectors, which represent less than 20% of the membership. Once the membership base has been established and reached an acceptable level of diversity, sectoral groups might be created to address the issue.

Additionally, platforms indicated that it was sometimes difficult to conceptualise a neutral joint research activity, event and/or project that did not favour or give a competitive advantage to a particular member.

PART III

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Aerial view of Life Project site.

9 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been drawn from lessons learned shared by the various platforms. Practitioners interested in establishing platforms are encouraged to refer to this study to understand the critical success factors and challenges for establishing platforms, and to develop plans accordingly. Furthermore, practitioners can draw on the most relevant platforms featured in this study to tailor their own models and strategy.

All of these recommendations may need to be adapted to fit within the regional and national context that they are operating in.

9.1 Financial sustainability

9.1.1 Funding acquisition and management

- Secure adequate seed funding to set-up the platform.
- Secure additional funding from existing and/or new donors to maintain the platform if it does not collect membership fees.
- For platforms that received seed funding for their set-up, consider using membership fees only after seed funding has been exhausted. Otherwise, there might be a shortage of funding following the set-up stage.

9.2 Strategic steps

9.2.1 Improving added value

- Clearly communicate the platform's value proposition to companies.
- Engage with diverse sectors, involving governments, academia and NGOs to develop a holistic platform (either as technical partners or formal advisory body).
- Approach and get technical experts on board before recruiting members, to establish the platform's legitimacy.

9.2.2 Leveraging networks

- Approach IUCN Members, commission members as well as academia and other partner NGOs to support activities.
- Work with one or few 'champions' – committed and influential existing private sector partners.
- When recruiting, aim first for current and former private sector partners, including contacts made through conferences and extended network of initiating partners.
- Use the network of IUCN Members, commission members, academia and partner NGOs to identify potential private sector members for recruitment.

9.2.3 Ensuring flexibility and adaptability

- Accept that some initiatives will remain opportunistic/reactionary despite thorough planning.

9.2.4 Encouraging regular exchange of best practices

- Consider joining the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity.
- Present platform results at national, regional and global forums and conferences .

9.2.5 Building a governance structure and defining terms of reference

- Clearly identify a decision-making body for oversight.
- Define roles and responsibilities at the outset for each governance unit, e.g. decision-making body, advisory body, secretariat, etc.
- Plan regular meetings to ensure good governance.

9.2.6 Ensuring clear and regular communications with stakeholders

- Explain clearly concept and objectives to IUCN colleagues, IUCN Members and IUCN partners.
- Prepare precise presentations of the concept and objectives to interested companies.

- Mention platform objectives to member companies in a regular manner.
- Consider a potential pledge or charter for companies.

9.2.7 Conducting thorough due diligence

- Due diligence needs to be thorough to limit risks and enhance opportunities.

9.3 People and development

9.3.1 Engaging of platform members

- Conduct regular activities and/or organise regular meetings.
- Other forms of communications, such as newsletter and group chats, may be used to maintain engagement in-between formal gatherings.
- Create a sense of ownership and pride among platform members.
- Nominate in-company focal points from the start and have a formal system in place to nominate new focal points in case of resignation.
- Once a critical mass of members has joined, consider building sectoral working groups for enhanced engagement.

10 Conclusion

Businesses are becoming increasingly aware of the need to address nature in their operations. However, many at the beginning of the journey may not understand how to identify their impacts and dependencies on nature, or know how to take action to address these issues.

Business and biodiversity platforms are very useful mechanisms for creating a peer-learning environment and to encourage action. However, such platforms can indeed be challenging to set-up and maintain. This is due to a variety of reasons, ranging from the lack of enabling political and social environment to the lack of adequate human and financial resources. While the examples highlighted in this study draw on IUCN's network, there are other initiatives that can provide additional lessons and information, such as the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity, which is currently comprised of 21 national and regional initiatives, all working towards greater business engagement on biodiversity-related issues.

The world has less than 10 years to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. There is no time for failure! In order to make the most out of limited time, resources and energy, it is critical for any groups considering setting-up a platform learn the lessons of previous initiatives, as set out in this study, in order to fulfil their potential to scale up business action on nature.



Photo: © Sylvie Gillet

Field trip of Act4Nature group at Séché Environnement site in Changé, France, July 2019.

France

Entreprises & Biodiversité



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES To create a space for IUCN National Committee of France's private sector partners working on biodiversity mainstreaming to exchange with IUCN Members and work on common studies, tools and guidelines with other companies.

OPERATIONAL YEARS Since 2009

INITIAL FUNDING The platform was launched with initial funding from IUCN National Committee of France's private sector partnerships.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Capacity building

- Half-day or full day meetings – featuring interventions from French IUCN Members, experts of IUCN National Committee of France and external experts – are regularly organised and sometimes occurs on companies' sites.
- Organisation of seminars on transversal themes with colleagues, such as: protected areas, Nature-based Solutions, biodiversity law, IUCN World Conservation Congress, invasive alien species (IAS) and others.
- A bi-monthly newsletter is sent to all members, with a dedicated space for members to share their initiatives.

Research activities and tools development

- Studies and research projects have been conducted on the following topics: employee mobilisation and raising awareness of biodiversity, management of invasive alien species, reporting and biodiversity indicators, ecological mitigation. A staff training program on biodiversity was also developed.

Advocacy

- Encourage the French Government and public authorities to issue or reinforce biodiversity regulations and initiatives.

MEMBERSHIP

- Membership is only open to IUCN National Committee of France's private sector partners who are clearly interested in mainstreaming biodiversity in their operations beyond what is required by law (compliance).
- Also includes French IUCN Members and experts of IUCN National Committee of France: scientists, NGOs, government representatives from the Ministry of the Ecology, representatives from the new governmental agency for biodiversity (Office français de la biodiversité, OFB), international representatives of IUCN and others.
- The funding to maintain the working group is derived from partnerships. All companies provide the same contribution regardless of their size, turnover or profit margin. While at the start of the platform the contribution was not significant, it has grown as the working group developed more activities and publications. The contribution is re-evaluated every year depending on annual action plan.
- There are currently eight members: Ciments Calcia-GSM HeidelbergCement Group (cement and aggregates), EDF (energy), Engie (energy), Storengy (Engie subsidiary), Veolia (environmental services), Egiom (cement and aggregates), L'Occitane (cosmetics), Primagaz (gas distribution).

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Decision-making body: Member representatives and Elected Bureau of IUCN National Committee of France

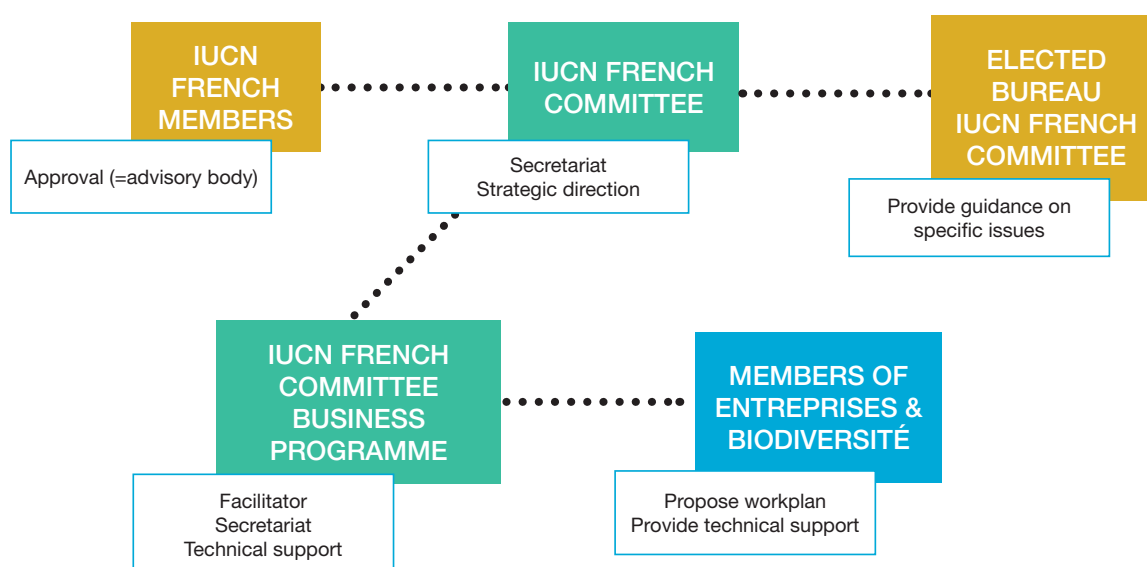
Advisory body: IUCN National Committee of France

Secretariat: Staff of the Biodiversity Programme, IUCN National Committee of France

External support: None

Additional details:

- The platform operates as a working group under the guidance of IUCN National Committee of France. A president of the Group is elected every three years by the members. The group is currently presided by Denis Leca (Storengy). All private sector partners are members of the working group, which meets two to four times a year.
- Each member company appoints two or more focal points (usually the Sustainability Director and/or the environmental or biodiversity officer).
- The annual work programme is developed every year at the beginning of the year and validated by the working group.
- Annual work plan and publications have to be validated by the Elected Bureau of the IUCN National Committee of France.



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Strong bilateral partnerships before starting the working group.
- Working only with IUCN partners ensures that companies have similar interests and challenges, thereby creating a good dynamic in the group.
- Dedicated IUCN National Committee of France team (three people).
- Organisation of seminars on transversal themes with our colleagues.
- Innovative offering as platform that convenes the NGO sector (IUCN Members) and private sector. While there is a competing platform for nature conservation, this platform is purely private sector-led.
- Availability of funding through existing partnerships.

CHALLENGES

- Bringing together different stakeholders enhances communication and understanding between cross-sector stakeholders, and benefitting from the diversity of ideas and skills to enlarge the spectrum of opportunities and solutions to protect and restore the biodiversity. It also enables each party to understand the realities of others' work: the hurdles, the goals, the effective leverages and the resources.
- The co-construction of the study ensures the members' interest in the discussed topics, thus guaranteeing their commitment. Besides, aiming towards common goals enhances the synergies among the working group. A common goal can facilitate the publication of studies and tools needed by the working group members in their activities.
- A diverse multi-stakeholder group ensures that different views are expressed and results will be widely shared and accepted in order to co-create solutions. The business representatives in the working group are specialised in biodiversity. A next step would include business members coming from non-environmental departments, such as the purchase department to further incorporate biodiversity issues in the whole company.

EXAMPLE OUTCOME(S)

- This way of working, based upon cooperation and collaboration, allows the stakeholders to build efficient and operational solutions. The outcomes of its reflections are widely shared to spread solutions, tools and studies to reduce the impacts on biodiversity. So far, the working group released six publications which were widely shared.
- The working group has managed to impose itself in the political sphere and may be consulted or provide its own position on specific issues.

Ghana

Businesses in Environmental Stewardship Network (BESNet)



OBJECTIVES To facilitate consultation with and participation of the private sector in policy discourse around addressing the drivers of deforestation and degradation as well as actions towards safeguarding Atewa Forest Reserve.

OPERATIONAL YEARS Since 2017

- INITIAL FUNDING**
- The platform was launched as part of a larger private sector mobilisation and engagement component of the 'Living Water from the Mountain' project. Of the initial funding, €130,000 was an active contribution of the private sector to the conservation of Atewa Forest and sustainable management of its watershed, while €40,000 went specifically towards the setting-up of the platform.
 - Funding was provided to A Rocha Ghana* through Leaders for Nature Netherlands.

- SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES**
- Capacity building**
- Several technical working sessions have been organised to sensitise members on natural resources and the role of companies in protecting these resources, including best practice guidelines, social and environmental standards, existing policies to address deforestation and forest degradation.

Field visits

- Field visits and engagements with local communities at Atewa Forest

- MEMBERSHIP**
- There is one type of membership. Although the primary target was companies relying on Atewa Forest Reserve and its watershed, membership has broadened to private sector organisations with interest in and commitment to sustainable management of natural resources. Interested companies can apply by making an online request on the A Rocha Ghana /BESNet website.
 - No membership fee is required to join BESNet. Annually, the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands provides €20,000 to maintain the platform.
 - There are currently nine members: Guinness Ghana Brewery Limited (FMCG), Panbros Salt Industries Limited (salt production), Accra Brewery Limited (FMCG), Blue Skies Products Ghana Limited (FMCG), Benso Oil Palm Plantations Limited (oil palm), Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (palm oil), C Alade Enterprise, Ghana Water Company Limited (water) and Summit Industries Limited (water). Two more companies have shown interest in joining the platform.

* A Rocha Ghana is an IUCN Member. For more information, please see: <https://ghana.arocha.org/>

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Seed funding was critical to the development of the platform.
- A specific objective and geographical focus area were presented at the start. Easy to relate to for companies.
- Dedicated resources for one-on-one meetings to build trust with potential focal points and company directors

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

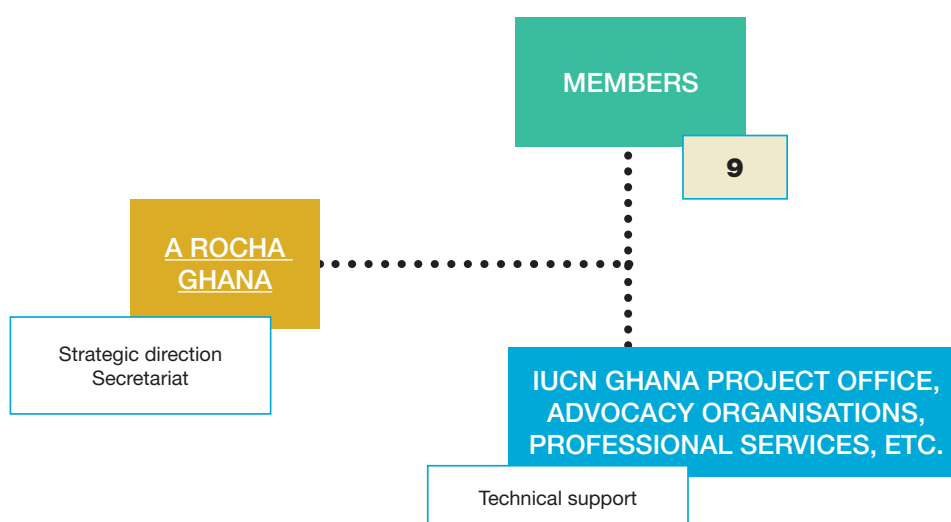
Decision-making body: A Rocha Ghana

Advisory body: None

Secretariat: A Rocha Ghana

External support: External support is sought based on activities, e.g. from IUCN Ghana project office, advocacy organisations and professional services such as PwC.

Additional details: Focal points – usually from the sustainability department – have been appointed in all companies.



CHALLENGES

- Member companies were worried about political scrutiny and exposure by joining the platform.
- Despite strong interest from several BESNet members in strengthening their investment in Atewa Forest Reserve by financing restoration projects, a government-backed bauxite mining project is on the way, thereby threatening the sustainability of the common resource which provided a good entry point for the establishment of the platform.

SUCCESS STORY

- Two members have shown strong interest in working on a bilateral partnership with A Rocha Ghana to undertake watershed restoration work in the Atewa Forest Reserve.

India

Leaders for Nature India (LfN)



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Businesses in India implement solutions to reduce ecological impacts by 2050, resulting in a net positive impact on natural capital.
- Businesses support the transition towards a sustainable, green Indian economy.

OPERATIONAL YEARS

Since 2013

INITIAL FUNDING

- The platform was launched with an initial funding of approximately €320,000 (approximately US\$ 350,000) provided by the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands over four years.
- Since July 2016, the programme runs solely on membership fees and is independent of its founding members (Steering Committee).

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Capacity building

- Training programmes, including webinars and master-class workshops, on topics such as biodiversity conservation and Natural Capital Protocol as well as sectoral guidance for addressing ecological footprint.
- Master-classes provides peer-to-peer learning and sharing of best practices.
- In-company sessions are also offered, which guide companies to understand the relationship between businesses and natural capital.
- Guidance for the development of a corporate action plan that integrates natural capital principles.

MEMBERSHIP

- The membership encourages only corporates who have a clear sustainability vision and interest in biodiversity conservation. The membership fee is INR 300,000 (approximately US\$ 4,250) for one year and INR 600,000 (approximately US\$ 8,500) for two years. Companies are strongly encouraged to sign up for two years.
- Members are encouraged to sign the LfN India Declaration, and to develop a corporate action plan and incorporate natural capital as part of their strategy.
- As of 2019, there are 11 members: Rio Tinto (metals and mining), Hindustan Unilever (consumer goods), Toyota (automotive), Wipro (IT), Aditya Birla Group (conglomerate), ACC (cement and aggregates), Apollo Tyres (tyre manufacturing), Tata Steel (steel manufacturing), Veolia (environmental services), Tata Power (power generation), Ambuja Cement (cement and aggregates), Hindustan Zinc Limited (Mining), Adani Ports and SEZ Limited (ports).

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Ensuring that adequate due diligence is conducted for all potential members.
- Seed funding was provided to help IUCN India establish the platform.
- Interest and commitment from companies in issues related to biodiversity conservation.
- Interest and commitment from senior management of companies in issues related to biodiversity conservation and natural capital is essential.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Decision-making body: IUCN India

Steering Committee: LfN India had oversight from its Steering Committee consisting of its founding members between the years 2013 and 2016.

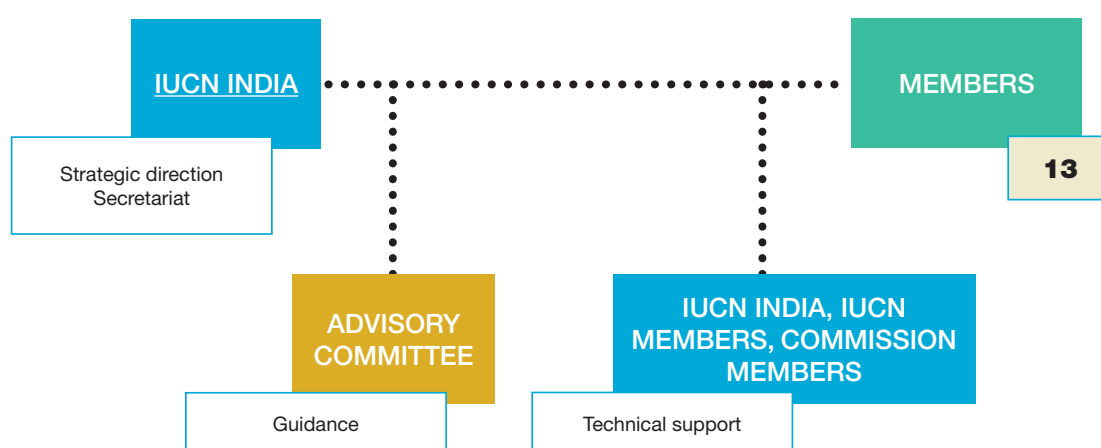
Advisory Committee: An advisory committee has been set up in January 2020.

Secretariat: IUCN India

External support: IUCN India, IUCN Members and commission members and other experts and agencies when relevant, e.g. capacity building sessions.

Additional details:

- Until 2016, Leaders for Nature India was steered through its founding members – IUCN India, IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands, Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Hivos and Wildlife Trust of India (WTI). They provided guidance on several aspects of the programme, such as governance, LfN Declaration, budget, action plan, etc.
- Each member company has one to two focal points who are in regular dialogue with the platform Secretariat.
- The in-company session are decided based on discussions between the company and IUCN on the most appropriate and relevant topic.



CHALLENGES

- Seed funding was limited to the initial establishment stages. Once the platform has been established, company membership fees can be a funding source.
- Ensuring sustained members' interest, while other platforms – non-membership based – are also very active, e.g. CII-led Indian Business and Biodiversity Initiative.
- Capacity building on targeted issues in member companies is often resource-intensive and demands specific technical expertise. This was addressed through the involvement of IUCN Members (institutional and commission members).

SUCCESS STORIES

- Tata Steel adopted a Biodiversity Policy in April 2016. It is presently being implemented.
- Aditya Birla Group launched group-wide Biodiversity Policy in April 2018. It is the first global conglomerate to adopt a corporate biodiversity policy.
- UltraTech Cements Ltd, an ABG company, launched group wide biodiversity policy in April 2018. It is presently being implemented.
- Tata Power developed a Global Biodiversity Guidance for its business and operations to integrate global biodiversity standards i.e. International Finance Corporation Performance Standards and ADB safeguards.

Netherlands

Leaders for Nature (LfN)

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that nature is being considered on the political agenda.
- To have member companies live up to their commitments and adopt sustainable practices.

While the political agenda was the primary objective of the informal group, the group focused solely on business sustainability once officially structured.

OPERATIONAL YEARS

2006–2016

INITIAL FUNDING

- The platform was launched with support from the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands in the form of staff time and seed funding for the organisation of gathering events.
- The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs provided financial support on an ad-hoc basis for activities.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Capacity building

- Four discussion forums per year (February, before and after summer, December) where external speakers are invited, including before and after summer forums, usually include a field activity such as nature walk, boat tour, etc.
- During the first forum of the year (February), member companies present their annual sustainability strategy.
- During the final forum of the year (December), member companies report on their sustainability achievements. A networking/social gathering event usually follows.
- Junior staff sustainability group was created with social gatherings organised on a monthly basis.

MEMBERSHIP

- Membership fees: EUR 7,000 (approximately US\$ 7,700) per year. Financial support for activities was also partly provided by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Netherlands.
- Members do sign the LfN 'Charter', which are goals that members should achieve by 2020. These goals are based on the six step process to incorporate natural capital:
 - All member companies have: identified their main impacts and dependencies on natural capital; developed and possibly published a natural capital account; integrated natural capital in their core business operations and strategy as an impact measurement; and completed projects in their value chain that limit their existing impacts and dependencies on natural capital, to achieve no net loss;
 - All member companies are committed to achieving net positive impact on natural capital in all new products and services developed;
 - All member companies fulfil a frontrunner role and actively engage all relevant actors and parties in their value chain from cradle to cradle to safeguard natural capital.

- Membership was open to all companies operating in the Netherlands. At the time of closure, there were about 20 members (2016) including ING Group (financial services), ASN Bank (consumer banking), Elsevier (publishing), Except (computer software), ABN AMRO (business bank), Akzo Nobel (chemicals), Arcadis (Management consulting), Ikea (furniture retail), Cofely (energy services), GDF Suez (now ENGIE, energy), DSM (chemicals), Philipps (electronics), IBM (computer software), Cargill (conglomerate), Port of Amsterdam, VBDO (Dutch Association of Investors for Sustainable Development), FMO (development finance), etc. The number of members has been more or less stable during the 10 years of operation and fluctuated by about 10% each year.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Sustainability discussions taking place at societal level brought a strong network together that demanded political action to conserve nature. The network became LfN-NL.
- Seed funding was critical to establish the platform.
- In-kind support, e.g. lunches, snacks, meeting rooms for events provided by members was crucial for the hosting of regular events.
- Wide network of the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands' Director.
- Commitment from companies (senior level management) from the start.
- Dedicated IUCN team; had a commission of junior professionals from the member companies who gave volunteer support to organise activities and who helped set the agenda
- Having large corporates as members from the start helped attract other important companies.
- Same sector companies need to have similar goals for collaboration to succeed.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Decision-making body: Steering Committee

Advisory body: None

Secretariat: IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands

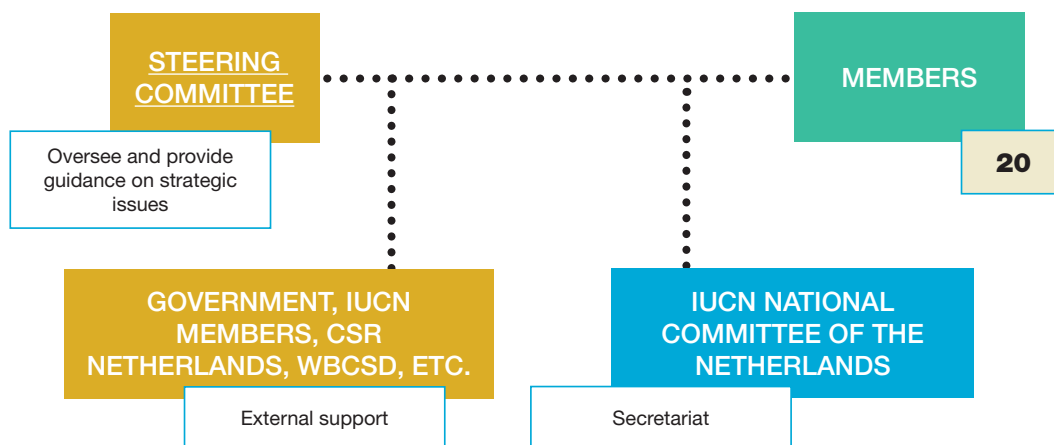
External support: Government, IUCN Members, CSR Netherlands and WBCSD

Additional details: Steering Committee members list:

- Willem Ferwerda (Founder of Leaders for Nature and chair Board of Patrons)
- Alexander Rinnooy Kan (president SER)
- Antony Burgmans (former CEO, Unilever)
- Herman Wijffels (former Director, World Bank)
- Camiel Eurlings (Managing Director KLM)
- Jan Theo Bautz (former Partner, Egon Zehnder International)
- Jan Willem Baud (Director NPM Capital)
- Jan Zuidam (former Board Member, Koninklijke DSM N.V.)
- Louise Fresco (Professor, University of Amsterdam)
- Peter Bakker (former CEO, TNT)
- Peter Blom (CEO, Triodos Bank)
- Rein Willems (former with Shell)
- Robbert Dijkgraaf (KNAW)
- Robert Reibestein (former CEO, McKinsey and Company Benelux)
- Robert Swaak (CEO, PwC)
- Roderick Munsters (CEO, Robeco)
- Wout Dekker (CEO, Nutreco)
- Yvonne van Rooy (President, University of Utrecht)

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Steering Committee meets once a year. Each member company appoints several focal points (usually one senior staff for strategic decisions and one or more junior staffs for day-to-day communications).



CHALLENGES

- Most companies had difficulties understanding how their daily work may impact biodiversity. Most companies linked biodiversity to wildlife only.
- Living up to commitments made as part of the LfN Charter was very difficult for many companies. One particular struggle that they faced was to make actions measurable. There were a few cases of greenwashing.
- Lack of support from colleagues who questioned the relevance of the platform numerous times.
- Keeping momentum with member companies was very time-consuming including the need to organise visits, events and discussions.
- Abrupt closure due to restructuring within the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands.

SUCCESS STORIES

Members included most high-level Dutch companies and important multinationals operating in the country.

Pakistan Karachi Conservation



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the engagement of the private sector in biodiversity conservation. • Build the private sector's environmental awareness and capacity by providing access to knowledge, tools and best practices. • Use actual and virtual forums to help members build networks. • Enhance the image of members as responsible businesses through publicity and outreach based on credible performance.
OPERATIONAL YEARS	Since 2017
INITIAL FUNDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUCN Pakistan received US \$12,500 from the Mangroves for the Future Programme, as part of a special grant, to organise the first roundtable in Karachi, and an exchange visit between the Karachi Conservation team and the Biodiversity Sri Lanka platform. • Additionally, to launch the platform, founding members, e.g. Engro Foundation, Pakistan International Bulk Terminal (PIBT) and Felda Westbury Qasim (FWQ) each contributed US\$ 10,000.
SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	<p>Field visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members undertook visits to mangrove plantations and observed reed bed model systems for biological wastewater treatment. • Organised a workshop to introduce wastewater treatment technologies for cruise boats operating in the area. <p>Research activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed solid waste management survey was conducted in the Port Qasim Area. <p>Awareness raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One million mangrove saplings were planted to raise awareness on 'greening Pakistan' together with the Pakistan Navy, the Sindh Forest Department and IUCN's Mangroves for the Future Programme.
MEMBERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership is open to individual businesses and business associations from all sectors, however, members must have active operations or trade within Pakistan. • There are two types of membership with different entry fees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Patron members: PKR 1 million (approximately US\$ 7,450) (ii) General members: PKR 0.5 million (approximately US\$ 3,725) • The annual membership fee is PKR 100,000 (US\$ 745) for all members. • There are currently four members (2019).
CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocating significant time into setting-up the platform and maintaining the engagement. • Short term sacrifice of bilateral engagements for multilateral engagements. • 'Champion' companies and regulators encouraged the engagement of other companies.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Decision-making body: A Steering Committee comprised of founding members, e.g. PQA, IUCN, Engro Foundation, PIBT and FWQ was established.

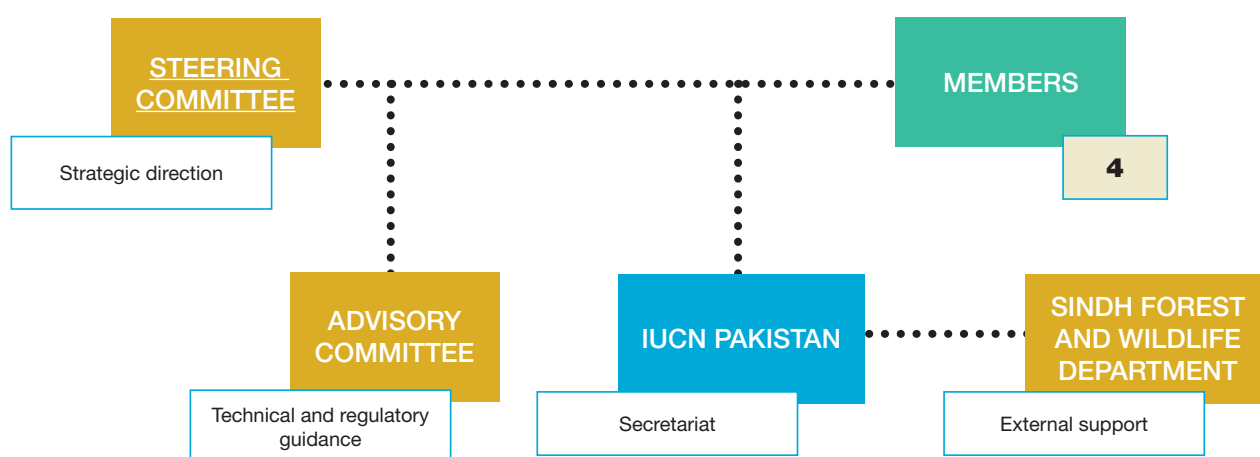
Advisory body: An advisory committee has been established to provide technical and regulatory assistance to the Steering Committee. IUCN and PQA have a seat on the committee.

Secretariat: IUCN Pakistan

External support: External support was provided by the Sindh Forest and Wildlife Department in the form of mangrove saplings for the plating activity.

Additional details: The Steering Committee meets annually to provide guidance on strategic issues and direction of the platform. The advisory committee supports the Platform in its operation and perform tasks assigned by the Steering Committee.

Members: Each company has nominated a focal point either at Director or CEO level.



CHALLENGES

- Demonstrating to companies the value of investing in conservation initiatives over purely social initiatives like health and education. The interconnectedness of ‘social well-being’ and ‘conservation’ issues, is not well understood, limiting the extent to which companies are willing to engage in conservation.
- Danger of momentum loss. While the platform has many initiatives on paper, it lacks on-the-ground impact.
- IUCN would like to focus solely on its advisory role, however, companies are not yet taking the ownership required.
- A lack of general consensus between member companies, which is needed to successfully implement projects. All companies involved have their own objectives, which can cause conflict and tension.
- Expanding the platform and launching activities to improve the environmental situation in PQA requires technical and financial capacity. The desire to expand the platform is not accompanied by the resources needed to do so.

SUCCESS STORIES

- The launch of the million mangroves programme in 2018 was a major success for the platform, as it not only involved existing members but also attracted other potential companies established in the Port Qasim area. The Sindh Forest and Wildlife Department also provided technical support.
- The launch also received noteworthy media coverage in major newspapers.

South Africa National Biodiversity and Business Network (NBBN)



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES The overall aim of the National Biodiversity and Business Network (NBBN)¹ is to assist businesses from various sectors to integrate and mainstream biodiversity issues into their strategies and operations. More specifically, NBBN's objectives are to:

- Provide a national platform to facilitate strategic discussions about biodiversity and business;
- Create national momentum about mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into businesses;
- Facilitate the development of a national agenda in terms of biodiversity and business;
- Facilitate cohesion and integration in the discussion and agenda about biodiversity and business;
- Facilitate focused, pragmatic and useful interventions to support businesses in the mainstreaming process.

OPERATIONAL YEARS Since 2013

- INITIAL FUNDING**
- The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)² launched the NBBN in 2013 in partnership with the South African Department of Environmental Affairs and six corporate entities. Each company provided ZAR 50,000 (approximately US\$ 3,300) as annual membership fees to launch the NBBN.
 - The Department of Environmental Affairs also provided funding for the set-up of the platform as part of a larger initiative to engage the private sector in biodiversity mainstreaming. It has also provided funding for other NBBN activities on an ad-hoc basis.
 - At a later stage, IUCN, through their partnership with Black Mountain Mining (BMM), has provided funding to the NBBN platform to support BMM with the implementation of the mitigation hierarchy for their Gamsberg Project in the Northern Cape.

- SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES**
- Capacity building**
- The platform organises several roundtable discussions per year on topics such as biodiversity mainstreaming in business practices, mitigation hierarchy, biodiversity offsetting, etc.
 - The platform also organises a large annual conference (100–150 attendees): 'National Biodiversity and Business Indaba' co-sponsored by the South African Department of Environmental Affairs. While the NBBN takes the lead on organising the conference, the audience is much broader than NBBN members. However, NBBN members can attend free of charge.
 - The platform provides business and biodiversity updates to members (and more broadly to EWT's private sector database) through a monthly newsletter.

Research activities

- The platform led a baseline assessment and benchmarking of biodiversity mainstreaming in South African businesses. The results of this assessment highlighted several key gaps with regards to biodiversity risk and performance disclosure amongst businesses in South Africa.

1 Member of the CBD's Global Platform on Business and Biodiversity: <https://www.cbd.int/business/>

2 EWT is an IUCN member.

- With technical support from an independent consultant and funding from Eskom, the NBBN initiated the development of a voluntary biodiversity disclosure mechanism: the Biodiversity Disclosure Project (BDP). Managed by the EWT, the BDP aims to build the capacity of businesses to manage their biodiversity risks and opportunities and enable them to disclose their biodiversity performance in a standardised and comparable manner.

The three main planned outputs from the BDP are:

- (i) A BDP platform, which provides companies with a practical avenue through which to voluntarily disclose their biodiversity impacts, risks and performance on an annual basis;
- (ii) A Biological Diversity Protocol (BD Protocol), which enables companies to measure and monitor biodiversity losses/gains over time;
- (iii) An Online Mainstreaming Biodiversity Into Business Toolkit, which builds the capacity of businesses to better recognise, measure, value and responsively manage their direct and indirect dependencies and impacts on biodiversity.

MEMBERSHIP

- Six companies started the platform with EWT. These six corporate entities had already indicated interest in mainstreaming biodiversity in their operations are listed here: De Beers (diamond mining and trading, now part of Anglo American PLC), Pam Golding Properties (real estate and property development), Nedbank Limited (financial services), Hatch (engineering), Pick n Pay (supermarket chain), and Transnet (transport and logistics).
- Annual membership fees range from ZAR 50,000 (approximately US\$ 3,300) to ZAR 100,000 (US\$ 6,600) depending on size of companies and interest.
- In 2016, the list of NBBN members grew to include Woolworths (supermarket chain) and Eskom (Electricity Public Utility). In 2018, Hatch, Transnet and Pam Golding properties withdrew from the platform. In 2019, Nedbank withdrew from the platform. There are currently five members.
- Recruitment has been mostly ad-hoc and opportunity-based as the platform has been mostly focusing on developing the thought leadership and the associated tools, e.g. BDP.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Seed funding was critical to establish the platform. Six companies provided funding necessary to establish and kick-start the platform.
- Additional funding is obtained from the hosting of the NBBN annual conference and consultancy services.
- The appointment of a platform coordinator (1 FTE) helped to ensure recruitment and maintain interest from companies.
- The platform's credibility was enhanced by the variety of sectors involved in NBBN. The Government involvement through the Department of Environmental Affairs also played a crucial role in its success as a credible platform.
- Encouraged by the Department of Environmental Affairs, NBBN joined the CBD's Global Business and Biodiversity Partnership, which increased its visibility.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

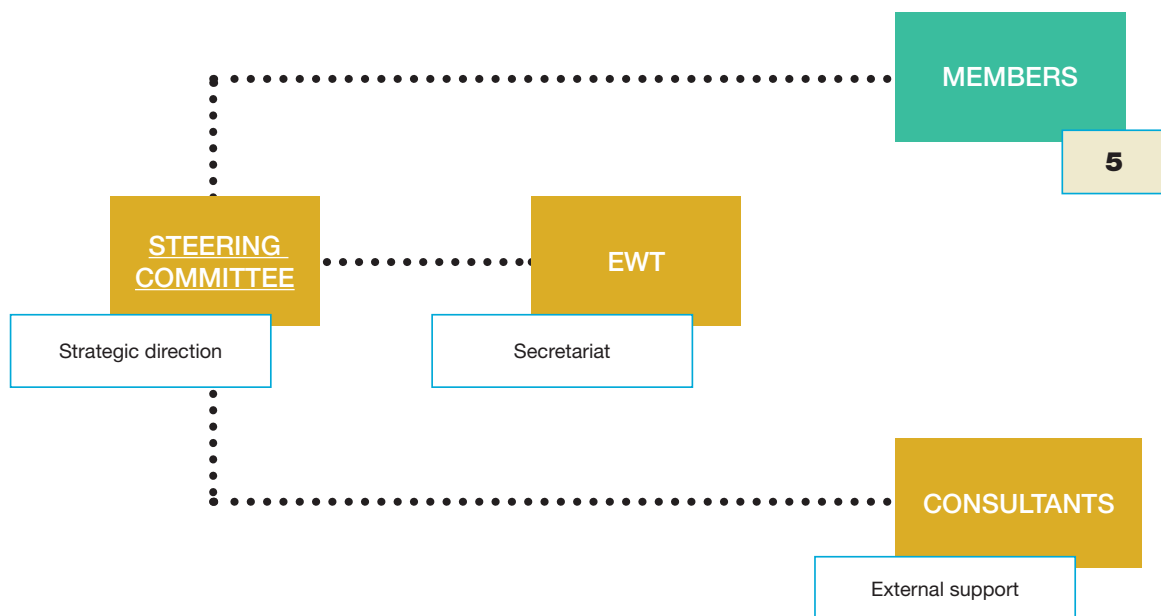
Decision-making body: Steering Committee

Advisory body: None

Secretariat: EWT

External support: Consultants

Additional details: A Steering Committee, composed of senior member representatives and the Director of the Science Policy Interface, Department of Environmental Affairs, provides strategic direction. The South African National Business Initiative was also involved as Steering Committee member for some time. Meetings take place four times a year and every member company has a focal point. These focal points are in contact with the NBBN secretariat hosted by EWT.



CHALLENGES

- Lack of private sector awareness and understanding of global targets and call for action.
- Lack of private sector contributions to global biodiversity framework and targets including the South African NBSAP and associated objectives.
- Developing a business case for companies to join and remain has proven difficult due to companies' focus targeting water stress, climate change and social issues.
- Actual biodiversity mainstreaming has only been conducted by one member, Eskom.
- Lack of human resources to conduct activities.
- All businesses on the EWT database received newsletters and were invited to participate in the annual conference generating limited additional benefits to NBBN members.
- NBBN saw a decline in members' interest in 2017/2018 due to the economic crisis in South Africa, and undertook a strategic review in 2019 to revisit the membership strategy and member value proposition of the NBBN.

SUCCESS STORIES

- The Biodiversity Disclosure Project (BDP), solely financed by Eskom is the very first initiative of such sort on the African continent.

Sri Lanka Biodiversity Sri Lanka (BSL)



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To add economic value to biodiversity conservation and integrate it into the core business of companies.
- To strengthen and increase the involvement of the private sector in biodiversity conservation.
- To promote national cooperation and the exchange of ideas and information relating to biodiversity conservation.

OPERATIONAL YEARS

- 2012 – as a programme of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce- Sri Lanka Business and Biodiversity Platform (SLBBP).
- 2015 – as Biodiversity Sri Lanka. a Not-for-Profit Company Limited by Guarantee under the Sri Lanka Companies Act No. 07 of 2007.

INITIAL FUNDING

Dilmah Conservation provided initial funding of US\$ 150,000 over three years.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Capacity building

- Various networking and learning events are organised to encourage dialogue and sharing of best practices among member companies. For example, webinars and “Ask the Expert” events give businesses the opportunity to ask questions and exchange ideas.
- BSL also has a training portfolio it uses to help companies mainstream biodiversity.
- Supports the University of Colombo for its Business and Environment Degree and also organises student placements among its member companies.

Collaborative projects

- BSL offers a project bank where member companies can find vetted conservation projects to support.
- Encourages and promotes multi-stakeholder and public-private partnerships in projects of national significance.

Project support

- BSL technically supports member companies’ biodiversity conservation projects.
- Has established a Project Ranking Scheme for scoring sound biodiversity projects of members.
- Has established an online platform of private sector led biodiversity projects island-wide.
- Supports companies in linking private sector-led biodiversity initiatives with SDGs, Aichi Targets and NBSAP targets.

Awards

- Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Awards of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.
- Since 2018, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Sri Lanka and BSL are collaborating to host Sri Lanka’s joint award for excellence in environmental/biodiversity project implementation,

MEMBERSHIP

There are three types of membership:

- (i) Patron membership is given to a select group of organisations that have demonstrated long-standing commitment to environmental issues. These Members back the platform and direct activities of BSL by pointing out priority areas that need to be addressed. Their one-time payment of LKR 150,000 (approximately US\$ 835) is valid for one year, after which the annual fee is LKR 50,000 (approximately US\$ 275);
- (ii) General membership is open to all Sri Lanka-based corporate entities that are considering a shift towards sustainable business through conservation commitment. The annual fee is LKR 30,000 (approximately US\$ 165);
- (iii) Small and Medium Enterprises membership. SMEs pay LKR 10,000 (approximately US\$ 55) annually.

Currently, there are 38 Patron Members, 39 General Members, three SME Members and three Associate Members (UNDP, IWMI and GIZ).

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Genuine interest and buy-in from member companies and staff.
- Dedication, credibility, and continued support among the initiating partners.
- A high-profile and committed governance structure.
- Credible and highly-recognised individuals in advisory capacity in the long term
- Recognition by government as the national business platform under the CBD.
- Flexibility and ability to evolve.
- Having 'champions' on both private sector and IUCN sides of the platform.
- A committed private sector partner as an initiating partner.
- Additional funding to maintain the platform through projects and organisation of events.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Decision-making body: Board of Directors (nine members)

Advisory body: There is no formal advisory body. IUCN has a permanent seat on BSL's Board of Directors as an initiating partner and is its chief technical partner.

Secretariat: Formerly hosted at the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce but now independent.

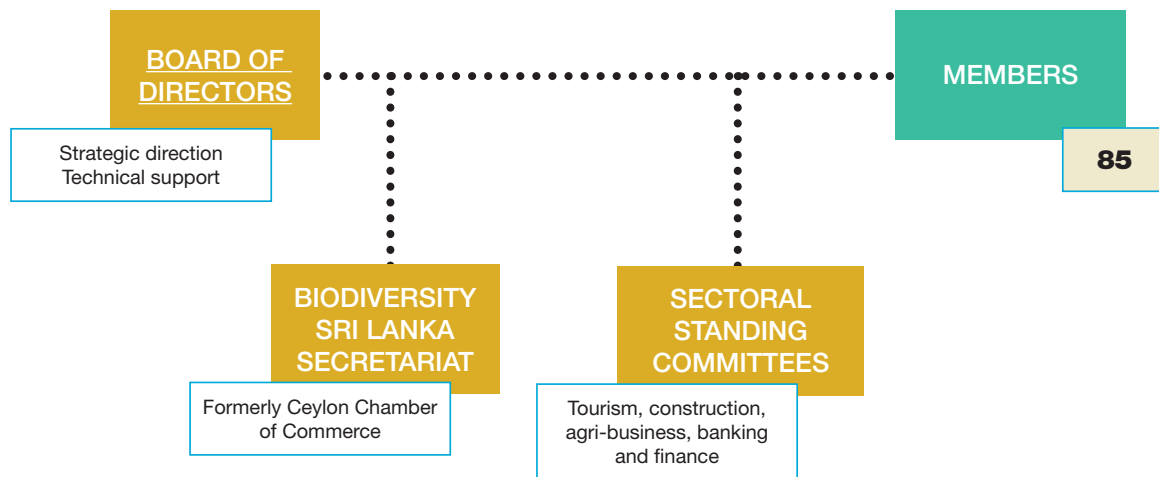
External support: Sponsorships from members on a needs basis for events and programmes.

Additional details: BSL is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors, whose chairperson is appointed for a period of two years. The members of the Board respectively represent the following:

- Initiating partners
- Patron and General Member representatives
- Technical specialists
- CEO of BSL secretariat
- Secretary, Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment

Currently, the Board operates under the chairmanship of Mr Dilhan. C. Fernando, CEO of Dilmah Ceylon Tea Company.

Standing Committees are composed of several working groups in sectors such as tourism, construction, agri-business, banking and finance.



CHALLENGES

- Engaging with private sector was difficult at the start due to the diverging opinions of IUCN Members.
- Funding was not sufficient to cover time required to launch the platform thus during establishment, initiating partners relied heavily on Patron members.

SUCCESS STORIES

- The public, multi-member and large-scale restoration project in Kanneliya Rain Forest.
- *Life Commitment* – an online survey of all private sector biodiversity projects in the country.
- Biodiversity Projects Ranking Scheme.
- Private sector-led policy dialogues contributing to national conservation priorities.
- Increased recognition by the donor community.
- Strong and increasingly engaged associate members.

Thailand Bio-Diversity Network Alliance (B-DNA)



OBJECTIVES To strengthen the private sector's role in nature conservation in Thailand, with a focus on biodiversity and contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Biodiversity Targets. More specifically, the platform aims to:

- Mobilise the private sector in support of the SDGs
- Provide knowledge and tools related to biodiversity conservation
- Facilitate collaboration to enhance biodiversity conservation in Thailand

OPERATIONAL YEARS Since 2018. The platform was soft launched at CBD COP 14 in Egypt in November. The official launch has not taken place yet.

INITIAL FUNDING B-DNA has been founded in collaboration with Toyota Motor Thailand, which in 2018, agreed to provide THB 2 million (approximately US\$ 60,000) a year for three years.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Capacity building

- At least four capacity building sessions are planned per year. These are aimed at equipping business' senior staff and employees with knowledge necessary to engage in sustainability and biodiversity conservation. BSL also has a training portfolio it uses to help companies mainstream biodiversity.

Collaborative projects

- B-DNA facilitates dialogue and collaboration on sustainability projects, supported by IUCN's extensive experience as a convener.

Awareness raising

- B-DNA's focus has been set on tackling plastic pollution for its starting phase, such as the large-scale coastal clean-up involving all B-DNA members was organised in July 2019 to raise awareness around marine plastic pollution.

MEMBERSHIP

- There is one type of membership. Membership is open to individual businesses that have active operations or trade within Thailand. The one-time entry fee is THB 200,000 (approximately US\$ 6,600). After the first year, there is an annual membership fee of THB 100,000 (approximately US\$ 3,300).
- As of 2019, there were 16 members including companies from the Toyota Group (automotive) and key suppliers, Singha Estate (real estate development and hospitality), Siam City Cement (cement and aggregates), Waste Management Siam (waste management), Dow Chemicals (chemicals) and EGCO (electricity).

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Having an established strategy from the beginning.
- Working with an IUCN partner.
- Learning from the challenges faced by other platforms above.
- Linking platform to national and global goals.
- Conducting thorough due diligence.
- Establishment of an Advisory Committee.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Decision-making body: A Steering Committee has been established to oversee and provide guidance on strategic issues and direction of the Platform.

Advisory body: An Advisory Committee made up of eight members from government, academia and NGO sector meets quarterly to evaluate and validate the direction of the platform and prioritise focus areas.

Secretariat: IUCN ARO and IUCN Thailand.

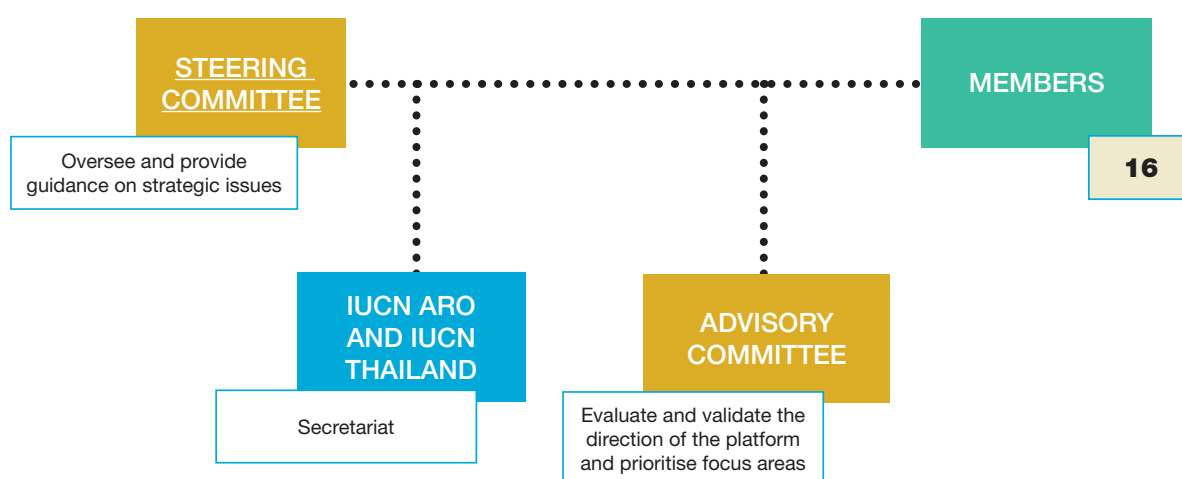
External support: None

Additional details: The Steering Committee is co-chaired by IUCN, Toyota and a member company nominated on a two-year rotational basis. For the first year, the Steering Committee has been run by the platform's co-founders: Toyota and IUCN.

The Advisory Committee is comprised of the following member organisations:

- Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP)
- Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP)
- Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR)
- Chulalongkorn University (CU)
- Kasetsart University (KU)
- Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BSCT)
- Thailand Environment Institute (TEI)

The Platform secretariat (located at IUCN Thailand) acts as the primary point of contact for handling day-to-day activities.



CHALLENGES

- Establishing a long-term timeline. While the platform was carefully planned from its inception, a lot of the work has been reactionary due to opportunities that have opened along the way. Many of these could not be foreseen and have been handled in the best way possible to meet deadlines.
- Several project concepts have been discussed relatively extensively, but have been too ambitious to materialise thus far. The establishment of the platform itself has proved complicated enough without extra project development work.
- Ambitious recruitment targets set by Toyota (20 members before official launch).
- Some members have complained about the prominence of Toyota.

SUCCESS STORIES

- Strong engagement of government officials in providing guidance to the platform.

Viet Nam

Ha Long-Cat Ba Alliance (HLCBA)

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	<p>HLCBA's overall objective is to build a partnership between government, business and community leaders that catalyses action to preserve and protect Ha Long Bay. Specifically, it aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build the political will for action and cooperation to preserve the area by establishing a high-level business-led Alliance, diversifying funding base and policy dialogues;• Increase public awareness of environmental conditions in the area through business capacity building and media engagement; and• Improve the state of biodiversity conservation in the area by supporting re-nomination of Ha Long Bay World Heritage Site to include Cat Ba Archipelago.
OPERATIONAL YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First phase: 2014–2017• Second phase: 2017–2019
INITIAL FUNDING	<p>The first three-year initiative (2014-2017) was funded by the United State Agency for International Development (USAID), with grants totalling US\$ 349,000. USAID also provided funding for a second phase with additional budget of US\$ 268,000.</p>
SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	<p>Capacity building (with a focus on sustainable tourism practices)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training workshops for local tour guides on the biodiversity of Ha Long Bay are offered.• Organise workshops/dialogues with businesses to call for business actions to reduce plastic waste on cruise boats, e.g. reduction of single-use plastics by providing reusable amenities, not providing bottled water and refusing single-use plastics.• Organise workshop to introduce wastewater treatment technologies for cruise boats operating in the area. <p>Awareness raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean-up events, called the 'Action for a Green Ha Long', are organised to raise awareness on the importance of environmental protection. <p>Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate the local authority to issue wastewater treatment regulations for cruise companies and port owners.
MEMBERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is one type of membership. HLCBA's members are businesses that adhere to the alliance's mission. These members have to sign the alliance's Terms of Reference.• There is no membership fee to join, as USAID has provided core funding for both project phases.• Since the establishment of HLCBA, the project has engaged 10 businesses as platform members, namely: Bhaya Cruise, Coca- Cola, Mundo Asia, La Regina, Grant Thornton, HTM Management Consultancy, Indochina Junk, Paradise Cruise, Pelican and Trails of Indochina.• The alliance has approached many other companies that have become 'friends', such as Vietjet, Vinpearl Ha Long, Sea Pearl Hotel Cat Ba, Gray Line, Handspan, Backpacker Hostel, Canon , Line X Paint Company, Up Cycling, Vina Color, Intrepid, Rubix, Boo Fashion and others. Members and friends together have contributed a total amount of US\$ 226,000 by the end of the project to implement the project activities.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Decision-making body: Alliance Leadership Committee

Advisory body: None. Technical support was provided by the Alliance Leadership Committee

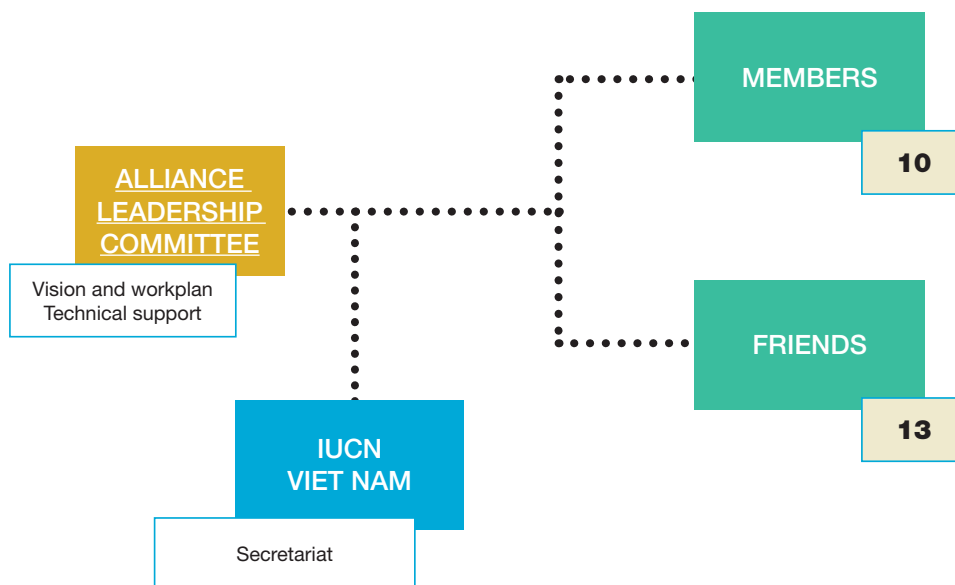
Secretariat: IUCN Viet Nam

External support: None

Additional details: The Alliance Leadership Committee (operating as a Steering Committee) was comprised of the following members:

- USAID
- IUCN Viet Nam
- Quang Ninh Provincial People's Committee
- Hai Phong City People's Committee
- UNESCO
- Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO (NATCOM)
- Ha Long Bay Management Board
- Cat Ba Heritage Management Board
- Business members: Bhaya Cruise, Coca- Cola, Mundo Asia, La Regina, Grant Thornton, HTM Management Consultancy, Indochina Junk, Paradise Cruise, Pelican and Trails of Indochina
- Alliance partners: Greenhub, Live & Learn, AMDI, Pan Nature, MCD, CECR, GreenID

This committee sets the vision for the HLCBA and advised on its workplan. Leadership Committee meetings are held every six months. USAID, apart from being a donor, was the driving force behind policy dialogues with the government as well as public campaigns (clean-up events, dialogues with businesses, etc.). The committee also provided political and technical support.



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Seed funding provided by USAID.
- Proactive media engagement and awareness raising allowed the platform to leverage significant co-funding from the private sector for its activities.
- Alliance leadership meetings held every six months are useful dialogues, in which IUCN plays the bridging role between local governments and businesses, advocating for enabling policies and business actions towards a common goal of environmental improvement in the area.

CHALLENGES

- Available corporate social responsibility (CSR) budget from each company is often dependent on the revenue/profit generated, and this can have an impact on how collaborative activities are implemented.
- While managers of large companies may have a long-term vision/strategy and are likely to fund project activities, it is not so much the case for smaller businesses.
- Alliance membership has been mostly driven by PR/marketing interests with quick return on investment. Companies are therefore more likely to support awareness-raising campaigns/events which attract media attention rather than long-term conservation work and biodiversity monitoring.
- Important communications gap between businesses and government.

SUCCESS STORIES

- Through continuous campaigns, workshops and dialogues on waste management, both local governments have issued a number of regulations to address pollution in their area. Since February 2019, cruise boat operators and port owners have to implement wastewater treatment systems. Furthermore, single-use plastics have been banned in the Ha Long Bay area since September 2019.
- Building on HLCBA and all private sector engagements generated through its work, Viet Nam Business for Environment (VB4E) has been set-up as a spin off platform to mobilise further funding for country-wide nature conservation projects.
- It is worth noting that the TH Group has become a co-founder of VB4E and provided about US\$ 120,000 to support the platform's establishment for three years after USAID's project funding ends.
- In total, co-funding provided by the private sector equalled US\$ 346,000.



Photo: © IUCN Viet Nam.

Volunteers clean up the beach in Viet Nam



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