



**Business @
Biodiversity**

Tourism: Towards benchmark methodology for biodiversity

Workshop Summary



The European Union Business and Biodiversity Platform

June 2011

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1. Introduction

Since the stakeholders within the environmental community, public and civil society and the business sector realized that business has a big role, responsibility and potential to contribute to the protection of biodiversity, they began cooperating to develop the business case for biodiversity and develop and implement measures to benefit biodiversity. This process has so far delivered many efforts and initiatives by the business sector in concrete measures, increased awareness and business commitment. Unfortunately, up until now the business sector has been lacking an instrument to accurately assess the effects of these measures and efforts for the benefit of biodiversity.

Although many initiatives are in place to assess the impact of business practice on the environment in for instance the realm of resource efficiency, carbon emissions and the environmental footprint, there is currently no adequate instrument in place to assess a business' performance towards biodiversity. The effect of a lack of this kind of instrument is that there is no clear view of either the effectiveness of any measures implemented by business or the value of their efforts.

Based on this, the European Commission took up the initiative to evaluate the criteria of the currently available benchmarking schemes and explore the need and possibilities to develop an EU Business & Biodiversity Benchmarking instrument.

This document sets out the lines along which the above mentioned need has been addressed during the workshop to reach an agreement upon the approach towards an EU Business & Biodiversity Benchmarking instrument.

2. Workshop aims

The aim of this workshop (see part 4 for more explanations on workshop details) was to explore whether any of the benchmarking instruments that are currently available can be utilized to assess the biodiversity performance of companies/actions and to explore the need and possibilities to develop such an instrument. This workshop also represents a unique opportunity to discuss benchmarking criteria that have been drafted by the EU Business & Biodiversity Platform.

Next to assessing the biodiversity performance of a specific company or action as such, the expected outcome of the workshop were to:

- Evaluate the current set of criteria of a benchmarking scheme;
- Give recommendations to modifications and amendments of those criteria.

3. Draft Criteria for the benchmarking approach

In order to decide whether a benchmarking scheme is suited to assess a business and biodiversity effort, the European Commission proposes a number of criteria that could apply. During the workshop we have explored which criteria need to be met in relation to business and biodiversity. These (draft) criteria should all be answered positively for a benchmarking scheme to be applicable.

- 1. Addresses biodiversity components?** Is the study clear about which of the four components of biodiversity it addresses: landscapes, ecosystems, species and/or biological resources?
- 2. Addresses biodiversity objectives?** Is the study clear about which of the four biodiversity objectives it addresses: conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of

- biological resources, equitable sharing of the benefits, and development outcomes (especially for cases in developing countries)?
3. **Based on a corporate biodiversity policy?** Does the study clearly link the case to the company's biodiversity policy?
 4. **Clear linkages to government biodiversity policies and regulations?** Does the study clearly link the case to relevant international, regional and national biodiversity policies and regulations?
 5. **Integrated into a corporate biodiversity action plan?** Does the study show how the case is clearly linked to the company's biodiversity and action plan?
 6. **Biodiversity performance indicators?** Does the case study clearly describe which biodiversity performance indicators are used in the case?
 7. **Biodiversity performance monitoring and reporting?** Does the study clearly describe the performance monitoring and reporting processes for the case?
 8. **Independent verification?** Does the study clearly explain whether and how the case has been independently verified?
 9. **Sustainability of the biodiversity action(s)?** Does the study indicate whether and, if so, why the biodiversity actions of the case are sustainable?
 10. **Replicability of the biodiversity actions(s)?** Does the study provide guidance on the how the case could be replicated or scaled up across the company or the sector?
 11. **Is the ecosystem/habitat/species important?** E.g. Is the action in a Natura 2000 area or one covered by the Habitat or the Birds Directive? Is it threatened? Is it indigenous?
 12. **How extensive is the impact?** E.g. What is the geographical area covered? What other types of land use can be found in the region? Are there negative side effects?
 13. **Environmental benefit, including:** Integrating legal and ecological constraints and especially the European biodiversity policies – Birds and Habitats Directives, and Natura 2000 – into strategies considering the value chain with a sustainable sourcing policy.

During the workshop the criteria were discussed and considered with the objective of evaluating whether participants can work with these criteria and if they are valid for their industry.

4. Workshop methodology

The workshop was supposed to last one day and to be organized in two phases described below: During the first phase, the main session aimed at providing the participants with sufficient background on the EU Biodiversity Strategy and presenting each of the 13 drafted criteria in details. The second phase was dedicated to discussions among the participants about the applicability of this set of criteria.

Unfortunately, the workshop has been cancelled due to the low number of participants. However in order to assess the applicability of the set of criteria, interviews (over the phone) have been held individually with each participant of the B@B tourism sector between the 1st and the 8th of July, 2011. This exercise lead to a discussion and the review of the 13 drafted criteria in order to agree on a basis of benchmarking scheme for the tourism sector.

5. Case studies

Last year, during our first workshop we proposed a first analysis of 5 benchmarking scheme/methodologies relevant for the tourism companies. Those existing methods can help companies to answer some of the requirements included in the benchmarking criteria.

The following table shows what methodologies/schemes can be useful for companies in the biodiversity benchmarking criteria framework:

	Guidelines name	CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and user's manual	Tourism and biodiversity - Mapping Tourism's global footprint	Linking Communities, Tourism & Conservation: A Tourism Assessment Process. Conservation International:	Wildlife Watching and Tourism. UNEP/ CMS	Hotel Biodiversity Operational Guidelines "Biodiversity: My hotel in action"
EU Benchmark criteria	1. Addresses biodiversity components?				X	X
	2. Addresses biodiversity objectives?		X		X	X
	3. Based on a corporate biodiversity policy?			X	X	X
	4. Clear linkages to government biodiversity policies and regulations?	X		X		
	5. Integrated into a corporate biodiversity action plan?				X	
	6. Biodiversity performance indicators?					
	7. Biodiversity performance monitoring and reporting?	X				X
	8. Independent verification?					
	9. Sustainability of the biodiversity action(s)?	X		X	X	
	10. Replicability of the biodiversity actions(s)?			X	X	X
	11. Is the ecosystem/habitat/species important?			X		
	12. How extensive is the impact?			X	X	
	13. Environmental benefit, including: Integrating legal and ecological constraints and especially the European biodiversity policies strategies			X	X	

This analysis shows that most of the time, the tools and guidelines available partially provide information to help to answer benchmark criteria requirements, especially for case studies linked with wildlife watching (Wildlife Watching and Tourism UNEP/CMS) and hotels (Biodiversity My Hotel in action). The publication from Conservation International (Linking Communities, Tourism & Conservation) is a good source to answer criteria for projects of any kind. The analyzed publications suffer from a lack guidelines on biodiversity performance indicators and independent verification which are two important EU benchmarking criteria.

That is why, we have encouraged B@B members for tourism sector to go further with an update on the evolution of efforts made on this kind of methods over the last year in relation to the benchmarking initiative of the European Commission. In that context participants have prepraed the following cases¹ described below.

These cases contributed to the discussion on the 13 drafted criteria for the elaboration of a comprehensive benchmarking approach, especially regarding the biodiversity performance indicators and aspects linked to valuation.

5.1. Case: European Biodiversity Standard

Description

The European Biodiversity Standard (EBS) is a methodology which has been developed by ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) in cooperation with Middlemarch Environmental Limited (MEL) to measure and improve a company's environmental performance. It focuses not just on one certain project or initiative, but instead assesses a whole company. It is an assessment of a company's biodiversity management performance looking at ten components: commitment, survey, assessment, legislation, planning, implementation, measurement, partnerships, communication and review.

The methodology has been developed by MEL and they have, in cooperation with the Wildlife Trusts, widely implemented it in the United Kingdom for a number of years under the name

¹ A case study can be a benchmarking scheme, a methodology or an instrument as well as a specific benchmarked project or initiative.

Biodiversity Benchmark. A number of big organizations have applied for and acquired the Biodiversity Benchmark throughout the years. For example Center Parks was the first organization to get this benchmark for their entire organization, all their site, in the UK. MEL has together with ECNC adapted their methodology to better fit the European market and this adjusted approach has now been made available under the name European Biodiversity Standard.

The EBS process consists of two stages of assessment; a self-assessment by the company in question to review their biodiversity performance and decide whether there is need for further improvement or the time is right to apply for the external assessment, and the external assessment by an independent assessor which verifies the self-assessment and seeks evidence of implemented management systems and progress made in each of the ten components of the EBS.

If a company makes the grade, the assessor will recommend that it is awarded the European Biodiversity Standard to the accreditation body (ECNC). If it is not quite there, the assessor will advise on the requirements for re-application. The European Biodiversity Standard is accredited for two years, with an interim self-assessment after year one and a full re-accreditation process at the end of two years.

Application of criteria

1. Addresses biodiversity components?

2. Addresses biodiversity objectives?

The EBS clearly addresses a company's performance regarding ecosystems and biological resources as well as the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of these resources by looking at the planning, implementation and measurement of measures taken by the company to minimize the impact on biodiversity and even improve the biodiversity on company sites.

3. Based on a corporate biodiversity policy?

Throughout all ten components of the assessment procedure, the proof of certain actions, procedures, measures, monitoring, etc. should be traceable back to the business policy of the company being assessed.

4. Clear linkages to government biodiversity policies and regulations?

One of the components of the EBS is the demand that the company adheres to government legislation and policy. The assessed company needs to provide evidence that all relevant legislation is being identified and adhered to.

5. Integrated into a corporate biodiversity action plan?

The component 'planning' assesses if the company has set objectives, targets and action plans for biodiversity issues. Through this component therefore, the EBS assesses whether biodiversity action plans have been created to integrate the company's biodiversity policy and actions.

5.2. Case: Corporate Ecosystem valuation

Description

The Guide to Corporate Ecosystem Valuation (CEV) was launched in April 2011 by the WBCSD (World Business Council for Sustainable Development) in collaboration with ERM, IUCN and PwC. The main objective of this Guide is to provide a process to explicitly value and account for ecosystem costs and benefits in business decision making. It has been road tested by 14 international companies. It is downloadable at the following link: www.wbcsd.org/web/cev.htm

The Guide is divided on 2 parts:

- « Screening » process that could be performed following the Corporate Ecosystem Services Review (ESR) methodology
- « Methodology » to conduct a CEV divided in 5 steps (scoping, planning, valuation, application, embedding)

This approach can be useful to better understand and address some of the benchmarking criteria. In fact the valuation approach has been developed in line with a typical Environmental and Social

Impact Assessment (ESIA) process. Different valuation approaches are considered: **qualitative, quantitative and monetary. Ecosystem valuation techniques** are presented according to different type of ecosystem services.

Application of criteria

1. Addresses biodiversity components?
2. Addresses biodiversity objectives?

The first part of the methodology, that foresees a screening process through the ESR helps to address biodiversity components and objectives getting specific to their impacts and dependencies on the organization. At this stage, those notions of impacts / dependencies have not yet been explicitly considered in the benchmarking criteria but the interest and relevance of their incorporation could be discussed during the workshop.

11. Is the ecosystem/habitat/species important?

12. How extensive is the impact?

13. Environmental benefit,

In the CEV methodology, the valuation in itself is presented as a 9 step process and enables to address some benchmarking criteria such as the relative significance of the ecosystem services affected, and the environmental changes (taking into account environmental and physic-chemical changes). The techniques suggested by the CEV approach to better understand and address those criteria should be discussed during the workshop. Moreover, the CEV Guide suggests other steps to the valuation of a biodiversity programme such as the evaluation of internal and external benefits and, if feasible, the valuation phase through monetization. The interest and relevance of the incorporation of those parameters in the benchmarking criteria could also be discussed during the workshop.

5.3. Case: Ljunghusen Golf Club

Description

The Ljunghusen Golf Club in Sweden is located on an international wetland area. The public opinion does not consider golf course as an environmental friendly place (fertilizers are too heavily used as well as pesticides, no or little access for general public, little or no wildlife and flora).

However, environment and biodiversity are a central concern of many golf courses and golf associations all over the world. For more than ten years, the Ljunghusen Golf Club indeed performed several tasks aiming to protect the environment on site and especially the rich local biodiversity. Like some other well involved golf courses, this initiative received the Golf Environment Organization Certification in 2009 which is an international certification designed for golf courses.

This initiative is furthermore integrated in the European Golf Association 10 steps-guideline aiming at protecting, enhancing and restoring biodiversity on golf courses dedicated for golf courses all over Europe. This guideline was discussed with the European Commission. The dissemination of the guideline is done through the national associations.

The tasks performed by the Ljunghusen Golf club include:

- Ecological studies on plants, birds, mammals amphibians and red listed species
- Work on habitats (increase the size of habitat patches, connect internal habitat patches, connect patches with external habitats, create new habitat corridors, improve and diversify habitat edges)
- Consultation with local nature conservation organisations
- Activities for environmental education
- Conservation and enhancing landscape and cultural heritages
- activities to conserve, reduce and minimize water consumption
- Careful use of fertilizers

Application of criteria

1. Addresses biodiversity components?

2. Addresses biodiversity objectives?

Since the activity directly depends on a natural site, the case study addresses habitats and wildlife species (birds, flora, and mammals).

The biodiversity objectives addressed are the conservation of biodiversity (golf course close to nature reserves), and the equitable sharing of benefits between golfers, birdwatchers, walkers.

5. Integrated into a corporate biodiversity action plan?

This case study is part of bigger initiatives, the 10 steps guideline for golf courses and the Golf Environment Organization certification.

8. Independent verification?

There is an independent verification by an accredited auditor of the Golf Environment Organization Sustainability Associate

9. Sustainability of the biodiversity action(s)?

10. Replicability of the biodiversity actions(s)?

The case study indicates that the biodiversity actions of the case are sustainable since the studies and certification proved the efficiency of the management. Furthermore such actions are bound to be replicated on other golf courses since they face the same environment and biodiversity problems. The European Golf Course Association focused on the replicability questions with the 10 steps guidelines

5.4. Case: Pierre & Vacances new recreational center in Moselle (France)

The Pierre & Vacances group conducted a study on biodiversity protection prior to the building of tourism accommodations in a new site located in Moselle France. This study paved the way to an ecology and forest management plan for the site. This case study was also analysed through the EU benchmark criteria.

6. Workshop questions

These examples clearly show that the different benchmarking methodologies fit to at least the majority of the set criteria. How these benchmarking methodologies relate to all the criteria and which is most suitable, based upon these criteria, will be further evaluated together with the participants during the EU Business & Biodiversity Benchmarking workshop.

In order to facilitate this evaluation, the following questions were proposed to the participants:

General Approach

- Do you consider that the given draft criteria for the benchmarking approach sufficiently address the issues regarding biodiversity within the food supply sector?
- What is needed to be considered a biodiversity leader in the food supply sector?

Feedback other benchmarking methodologies / schemes

- Do you think the methodological guides presented facilitate the work to address the benchmarking criteria?
- Are there additional relevant tools not presented during the workshop that have to be included for developing a benchmarking mechanism for the tourism sector in relation to nature and biodiversity impacts?

Specific feedback on benchmarking criteria

- Which suggestions would you have for further elaboration or amendment of the given draft criteria for the benchmarking approach? Which criteria would you add / modify?
- Can the different stakeholders work with these benchmarking criteria?
- Are there any obstacles for applying these benchmarking criteria?

- How to measure the success and effective long-term commitment and implementation of biodiversity related improvements based on the listed benchmarking criteria?
- Which aspects have to be taken into consideration when establishing monitoring and measuring systems?
- How can we use the experiences from the case studies presented in this background document for further development and refining of the benchmarking criteria for application in Europe and beyond?

7. Summary of discussions

This part of the report summarizes the feedbacks of the following participants:

- Malgorzata Steckiewicz (Business To Nature)
- Olivia Ruggles-Brise (WTTC)
- Stig Persson (EGA Golf Course Committee)
- Alix Houdayer (Pierre & Vacances)

The cases listed in chapter 5 and prepared for the workshop clearly show that the different benchmarking methodologies fit to many of the drafted 13 criteria.

Moreover, the assessment of Pierre & Vacances case and Ljunghusen Golf conveyed by PwC allows getting feedback on concrete initiatives.

However in order to answer carefully all criteria, several documents are needed (technical document describing the initiative, communication support of the initiative, etc.) to cover all the areas highlighted by the criteria.

The review resulted in various conclusions such as: new criteria, amendments of existing criteria, and a sorting into categories in order to simplify the system.

Two general remarks arose from the discussions:

A need to define precisely the scope of the benchmarking:

Does it apply to a company, a product, a project?

The term "study" should also be clearly explained.

Indeed, a common basis is necessary in order to determine relevant criteria and enable a homogeneous valuation for benchmarking purposes.

A need to create criteria categories would be helpful according to participants

Having a list of criteria from 1 to 13 is confusing, it should be more organized. The following categories could be used:

1. Biodiversity components and objectives (Criteria 1 & 2)
2. Link to the company policies and local regulations (Criteria 3 to 5)
3. Biodiversity performance (Criteria 6 to 8) – specifying baseline situation and current performance
4. Replicability (Criteria 9 & 10)
5. Impact and benefit (Criteria 11 to 13)

The following part describes the discussions on the criteria. Amendments were made and new criteria were added.

Criteria 1 and 2:

- ✓ They are relevant since they inquire about important information (biodiversity components and objectives as defined in the CBD). However these indicators seem to be hard to understand for several participants, since they are no biodiversity experts. The terms should be explained and adapted according to the specificities of the sector.

- ✓ The concept of ecosystem services (as defined in the Millenium Ecosystem Assessment) should be used since it is more understandable by businesses and will help companies to link the case with their activity.
- ✓ The second criterion defines four biodiversity objectives: conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of biological resources, equitable sharing of the benefits, and development outcomes (especially for cases in developing countries). However these objectives are not easily understandable by participants, an adaptation to the tourism sector may help (i.e. is enjoying a touristic place is considered as equitable sharing of benefits?).

Criterion 3 & 5:

- ✓ These criteria are relevant only for big companies because SMEs cannot afford to have a corporate biodiversity plan. They should be included since they are also a target of the platform
- ✓ Even big companies cannot all afford to have a corporate biodiversity policy. It could be for example included into a global policy on the environment. It could be wise to add "Based on a corporate policy that includes biodiversity?".

Criterion 4:

- ✓ This criterion should include the references to the local constraints that can be stronger than national biodiversity policies and regulation.

Criteria 6 and 7:

They require more specifications on what is asked.

- ✓ The criteria should thus specify the indicators referred to as performance indicators and also include qualitative information. Monitoring tools or method should as well be listed.
- ✓ These indicators should be accepted by every company. A solid reference would help. Global Sustainable Travel Council (GSTC) could be the baseline for such performance indicators.
- ✓ Sometimes companies could use performance indicators not directly related with biodiversity but including it (for example indicators on parkland management). Since biodiversity performance indicators are not common, a fall-back approach should be possible.

Criterion 8:

- ✓ Such a third party should be accredited to perform independent verification. The process and scheme of accreditation should be précised to avoid any greenwashing.

Criteria 9:

- ✓ The term "sustainability" should be explained. What are the scope and the indicators? Does it refer to the period of time over which the action will have a positive effect on biodiversity or to the inclusion of the "sustainability" dimensions, namely: social (already partly tackled in criterion 2), economic, in the actions implemented?
- ✓ This indicator also depends on the criteria 6 & 7.
- ✓ The economic and social aspects can give important indications on the viability of the actions.

Criterion 11:

- ✓ National or regional protected areas should be included to refer to the local importance of the initiative. Many good examples are located in ordinary places, but can still be good examples of successful implementation and management.

Criterion 13:

- ✓ This criterion is unclear for most participants of the tourism sector. The sourcing policy is not a focus point for tourism companies. Details should be given to enable a better understanding.

Additional criteria were suggested by the participants:

- ✓ **Costs and investments and hiring of external skills**
The question of costs and necessary investment should be raised to answer questions such as “Is this case study replicable every year in a given company or it is so expensive that we can perform it only every 5 years”, “Was the case study started from scratch and therefore a strong investment was needed, or was it part of an on-going process with slow changes and thus low investments?”
The question of investments also relates to the question “Is the project feasible by internal employees or are external consultants needed?”
- ✓ **Supply Chain**
Is the project integrated in the supply chain? Are suppliers engaged in the initiative?
- ✓ **Communication:**
Communication around the project/company and the lessons learnt would be interesting also to add as a specific criteria

8. Conclusions

The rich discussions we had during the contacts with Platform members showed that the current defined criteria need more explanations for some of them. They feel that sometimes they have not sufficient knowledge to answer those criteria. There is a clear need to give the reporting guidelines and tools to assist companies in their answers.

It appears also that there is no common benchmarking tool available for the tourism sector that fulfill all criteria.

Participants would like also to have a classification of benchmarking criteria and have proposed some additional criteria that are considered at this stage.

The European Union Business and Biodiversity Platform

The EU Business and Biodiversity Platform is a unique facility within the European Commission's Initiative where businesses can come together to share their experiences and best practices, learn from their peers, and voice their needs and concerns to the European Commission. The Platform aims to strengthen the link between the business sector and biodiversity conservation. The IUCN European Union Representative Office, in partnership with PwC, ECNC and ELO, implements the B@B Platform which is funded by the European Commission. More information at <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business>.



IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN supports scientific research, manages field projects, and brings governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

www.iucn.org



PwC

The French SBS practice (www.pwc.fr/dd), member of PricewaterhouseCoopers Advisory France and a part of PricewaterhouseCoopers Sustainable Business Solutions (SBS) network (www.pwc.com/sustainability) is dedicated to providing clients with environmental/sustainability advisory services.



ECNC

The ECNC, European Centre for Nature Conservation, works for the conservation and sustainable use of Europe's nature, biodiversity and landscapes, developing partnerships with organizations, institutes and businesses.

www.ecnc.org



ELO

ELO, European Landowners' Organization, is committed to promoting a sustainable and prosperous countryside and to increasing awareness relating to environmental and agricultural issues.

www.europeanlandowners.org

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