



**Business @
Biodiversity**

Tourism Sector and Biodiversity Conservation

Best Practice Benchmarking



**Outcome of a workshop by the
European Union Business and Biodiversity Platform**

September 2010

Background

The EU B@B Platform has been working with the selected sectors to benchmark best practices in each sector with regard to the conservation of biodiversity.

This document is the outcome of the EU B@B Platform sectoral workshops which were held at the European Commission premises in Brussels on September 13 (Food Supply and Extractive industry), September 14 (Agriculture and Forestry) and September 15 (Finance and Tourism). These sectoral workshops aimed to present and discuss sectoral case studies linked to the Sectoral Guidance document, and to present and discuss benchmarking methodologies towards designing the European Business and Biodiversity Award.

This Sectoral Guidance document includes examples of best-practice guidance concerning the main risks, responsibilities and opportunities for companies in relation to nature and biodiversity conservation. It has been built upon existing guidelines and handbooks previously produced with business organisations and private companies, as well as other relevant materials. It also takes account of the EU nature legislation, notably biodiversity-relevant EU agreements and directives.

The objective of this Sectoral Guidance Document is to provide companies with tools and methods, guidance and best practices already implemented in the tourism sector to help them include biodiversity conservation in their strategies and operations and therefore support responsible and sustainable business models which promote Europe as a unique and high-quality tourism destination.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the document – why a guidance document?

“Biological diversity”¹, also called biodiversity, means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

The global loss of biodiversity has become one of the major environmental challenges of the 21st century. The concern for biodiversity is integral to sustainable development, competitiveness, economic growth and employment, and improved livelihoods. Many of the services that biodiversity and ecosystems provide are currently threatened. These are timber production, water supply, waste treatment, natural hazard protection, regulation of air quality, regulation of regional and local climate, regulation of erosion, etc. In the long run, the loss of ecosystem services threatens business opportunities as well.

Companies have started getting more and more involved in dialogues with governments and conservation organizations. In 2007, The High Level European Conference on Business and Biodiversity in Lisbon called on businesses, governments, the EU and NGOs to:

- Continue raising awareness of the strong competitive advantage to be gained by conserving biodiversity.
- Promote the use of a wide range of market mechanisms, corporate responsibility and regulatory schemes to conserve biodiversity.
- Support large and small businesses with operational tools for conservation of biodiversity and measuring their performance in meaningful ways.
- Encourage new incentives to develop and strengthen partnerships between companies, governments at all levels, NGOs and universities/scientific world.

Within this context, this guidance document aims at helping businesses find solutions to biodiversity challenges related to their activities, ensuring a fair income and sustainable growth, while providing benefits for biodiversity and ecosystems.

1.2. Purpose, scope and target of the document

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide companies with information needed to act towards biodiversity conservation. This document does not aim at providing new methods. The main available publications related to tourism and biodiversity are listed and analyzed through a business perspective. The final objective is to guide companies toward the most appropriate tools and methods for integrating biodiversity conservation into business activities, taking into account economic constraints and environmental benefits. This document has been designed to be a useful guide for SME's, independent hotel owners, as well as larger international tourism companies, from top management to local managers.

Compared to other sectors, the tourism sector is quite advanced regarding their approach to biodiversity. Several initiatives have already been launched to study and benefit from the close link between biodiversity and tourism such as concrete tools and recommendations, assessment tool, reports, maps. Those documents and best practices already target the different type of entities included within this sector: hospitality services (hotels, restaurants, etc), transportation services, outdoor recreational activities, ecotourism, tour operators and travel agencies. Sustainable tourism initiatives involving private businesses, such as the Tour Operators' Initiative (TOI) for Sustainable Tourism Development, already exist.

1.3. Nature and structure of the document

The second part is a general overview of information necessary for a good understanding of tourism-specific issues regarding biodiversity.

The third part presents a sample of main relevant studies and methods specific to the tourism sector. An analysis grid has been implemented to present “at a glance” an overview of each method’s content. The user should be able to choose the most convenient support (publication, method, tool) addressing their needs. This part will be completed by the analysis of relevant case studies developed by companies which are participants of the B@B Platform.

2. Tourism sector and Biodiversity

2.1. Definition of the scope and interdependencies with sectors

The tourism sector is a complex horizontal sector gathering various different services as follows:

- Transportation services (Airlines and platforms, cruise ships, etc.).
- Hospitality services (hotels, resorts, restaurants).
- Entertainment venues (amusement parks, recreational activities such as golf courses).
- Tourism operators providing commercial services mentioned above (travel agencies, tour operators, etc).

This document covers tourism services directly related to biodiversity:

- Hospitality services due to their impacts on the environment (in particular hotels close to protected areas) or their use of natural products (i.e. water consumption, food in restaurants, etc.).
- Companies linked to entertainment venues directly related to nature: protected areas, wildlife located in particular sites, sites dedicated to eco-tourism.
- Transportation services like cruise ships have a direct impact on biodiversity (coral reefs). Indirect impacts such as the ones caused by the airlines are not taken into account.

Tourism is interlinked with other economic sectors since tourism services use products from other sectors and vice-versa. Tourism, through its horizontal nature, creates jobs and promotes social integration and regional cohesion.

2.2. Tourism links to biodiversity

2.2.1. Impacts and dependency

Tourism and biodiversity are closely linked both in terms of impacts and dependency. Many types of tourism rely directly on ecosystem services and biodiversity (ecotourism, agri-tourism, wellness tourism, adventure tourism, etc.). Tourism uses recreational services and supply services provided by ecosystems. Tourists are looking for cultural and environmental authenticity, contact with local communities and learning about flora, fauna, ecosystems and their conservation. On the other hand, too many tourists can also have a negative, degrading effect on biodiversity and ecosystems and the increased tourism forecast to biodiversity hotspot countries will require careful planning and management to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity.

Therefore, the tourism sector has both a strong influence on biodiversity loss and a role to play in its conservation.

Tourism has a large potential to contribute to sustainable socio-economic development and environmental conservation. It can support the protection of natural resources, as local residents realize the value of their assets and try to preserve it. Tourism can also provide another form of

land use (other than agriculture) which supports land conversion. It can also contribute to maintaining livelihoods and preserving cultural practices. Opportunities arise for education and awareness-raising to understand and respect cultural diversity along with biodiversity. All of these opportunities can be targeted by managing and enjoying tourism responsibly.

For example, WWF highlights the following principles as priorities to define responsible tourism:

- Tourism should be part of a sustainable development strategy and plan.
- Natural resources should be used in a sustainable way.
- Pollution and consumption should be kept as low as possible.
- Tourism should respect the cultural values of the local population and enable them to participate in economic prosperity.
- Tourism should be informative and promote respect for local culture and environment.

The challenge is therefore to support these priorities while taking into account the main threats of tourism on the environment. These threats, as listed by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), include the impacts on ecosystems, soils, vegetation, water, air; and wildlife.

2.2.2. Benefits

The benefits of responsible tourism and its contribution to biodiversity conservation for tourism companies are:

- Diversifying and improving services and products.
- Providing a new angle for marketing and promotion.
- Improving public opinion and overall perception of the company.
- Differentiating them from competitors and acting as a role model of a responsible and innovative business.
- Enabling companies to reach new clients.
- Attracting intertwining businesses and therefore creating dynamics of economic growth.

It will furthermore guarantee the sustainable management of tourism resources, thus ensuring long-term use of tourism sites and resources and will also promote responsible behaviour among tourists. Those involved in or benefiting from the tourism sector would profit both today and in the future. Finally, risks regarding companies' image and reputation may arise in the context of new markets and the relationship with customers and shareholders who are more aware of ecological issues. Building sustainable partnerships with stakeholders and identifying common goals can contribute positively to a business's goodwill. Mitigating those risks will reinforce brand reputation and company image. Moreover companies acting as sustainability champions will directly benefit from such an image.

2.3. Policy and legislative context & other standards relevant to the tourism sector and biodiversity

The global policy and legislative context relevant for the tourism sector and biodiversity will be described in this section.

2.3.1. Global context regarding Business and Biodiversity policies

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992 called upon governments to commit to the development of national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The European Union is one of the 191 signatory parties to the CBD.

In 2005, two multi-stakeholder meetings organized by the CBD Secretariat and others examined ways to strengthen business engagement in the implementation of the CBD. This emerging consensus to engage business in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is reflected

in the Decisions of the CBD1. Decision VIII/17 was the first decision by the Conference of the Parties focusing exclusively on business and was adopted at its eighth meeting in Curitiba, Brazil, in March 2006. It covers the engagement of Parties with the business community when developing and implementing national biodiversity strategies and action plans; the participation of business in Convention processes; the compilation, dissemination and strengthening of the 'business case' for biodiversity; and the compilation and development of good biodiversity practice.

The last Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CoP10) was held in October 2010 in Nagoya. It evaluated, among other issues, the progress made towards the 2010 biodiversity target, including national reports and the Global Biodiversity Outlook, and studied the programme of work for the period 2011-2020¹.

2.3.2. European biodiversity policy

EU Biodiversity Policy

At the Gothenburg summit in 2001, EU leaders adopted the 6th Environmental Action Programme. This programme sets the objective to 'halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010'. This very ambitious goal surpassed the one set by world leaders in 2002 to 'achieve a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010'.

This 6th Environmental Action Programme was an addition to the Lisbon Strategy, which is an action and development plan for the European Union between 2000 and 2010.

Its aim is to make the EU '*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*' by 2010. The main fields are economic, social, and environmental renewal and sustainability. The EU leaders decided to add the environmental dimension commenting that '*failure to reverse trends that threaten future quality of life will steeply increase the costs of society or make those trends irreversible*'.

Within the first years after the adoption of the 6th Environmental Action Programme it became clear to policy makers and stakeholders within different sectors that a major shift in attitude towards the role of business in biodiversity was needed in order to reach the goals set for 2010. In response to CBD Decision VIII/17 on private sector engagement, the European Initiative on Business and Biodiversity was developed in a multi-stakeholder consultation process which involved EU, governmental, business and NGO representatives. It stresses that business has a crucial role in biodiversity conservation and seeks strong commitment from the business sector.

The initiative was concluded at the High-Level Conference on Business and Biodiversity which was held in Lisbon, Portugal, in November 2007. At this meeting the 'Message from Lisbon' was issued, stating that '*...there is a strong business case for biodiversity, including the competitive advantage gained from conserving biodiversity and using biological resources in a sustainable way, and recognizing that competitive markets also have an enormous potential to mobilize private resources and stimulate innovation*'.

The initiation of the Business @ Biodiversity Platform is one of the technical tools being developed to facilitate the process following the Message from Lisbon to involve businesses into biodiversity conservation.

The goal of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 was not achieved and new and improved policy steps therefore need to be taken to enhance efforts in the coming years. Biodiversity conservation and the financial and business sector involvement must now be integrated into new long-term economic strategies for Europe. In September 2010 the Belgian presidency hosted the conference 'Biodiversity after 2010 – biodiversity in a changing world'. The EU post-2010 target

¹ During the CBD COP10 (Nagoya, October 2010) the Decision on Business Engagement was adopted: <http://www.cbd.int/nagoya/outcomes/>

was presented at the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in October 2010, Nagoya, Japan.

The Habitats and Birds directives

The EU Biodiversity policy is supported by two directives, Habitats and Birds. These two directives set the framework of the Natura 2000 network of conservation areas. Nowadays, Natura 2000 is safeguarding Europe's most important habitats and species and is the cornerstone of EU biodiversity policy. Accordingly, Natura 2000 will be an important element of the EU Biodiversity Strategy aiming to *halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, restore them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.*

Natura 2000 is an EU-wide network aiming to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. It is comprised of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated by Member States under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which they designate under the 1979 Birds Directive. Natura 2000 is not a system of strict nature reserves where all human activities are excluded².

2.3.3. Other international convention and other initiatives

Ecosystem related treaties and conventions

RAMSAR

Ramsar is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources (“the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development”). It overlaps with the Habitats Directive. It is the only global environmental treaty that deals with a particular ecosystem and the Convention's member countries cover all geographic regions of the planet. The Ramsar Convention sponsors and hosts a number of wetland-related programmes and activities directed to the Ramsar and wetland community and to the general public.

Species related treaties and conventions

CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species)

CITES was the common name for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, established in 1973, which regulates international trade in threatened species and products derived from them. Trade in wildlife and wildlife products can put severe pressure on some populations of animals and plants, and, linked with other factors such as habitat loss, can bring some species close to extinction.

CITES currently provides protection to more than 30,000 species of animals and plants, whether they are traded as live specimens or used to make other products. The treaty includes three levels of protection, which are listed in three appendices to the treaty:

- *Appendix I* lists species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.
- *Appendix II* includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid use incompatible with their survival.
- *Appendix III* includes species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other countries for assistance in controlling the trade.

² Guidance documents related to management of Natura 2000 sites can be found on: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm

Each country adopts its own domestic legislation to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level. There is some variation of the requirements from one country to another and it is always necessary to check national laws, which may have stricter requirements than those of the convention.

The IUCN Red List

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, the world's most comprehensive and scientifically based inventory of the global conservation status of plant and animal species, evaluates the extinction risk of thousands of species and subspecies in all regions of the world. The Red List includes three main categories of threatened species:

- *Critically Endangered Species* are those that face an extremely high risk of extinction in the immediate future, because the population has declined by 80 percent or more over the last 10 years, is confined to a very small area of habitat, or has fewer than 250 mature individuals. The Javan rhino is one example.
- *Endangered Species* are those facing a very high risk of extinction in the near future, because the population has declined by 50 percent or more over the last 10 years, is confined to an area of less than 5,000 square kilometers of fragmented habitat, or has fewer than 2,500 mature individuals. Examples include the cheetah, tiger and African wild dog.
- *Vulnerable Species* are those that face a high risk of extinction in the medium-term, because the population has declined by 30 percent or more over the last 10 years, is confined to an area of less than 20,000 square kilometers of fragmented habitat, or has less than 10,000 mature individuals. Vulnerable species include the Komodo dragon, India bison, humphead and rainbow parrotfish, seahorses, giant clam, great white shark, polar bear, African lion and elephant, hippopotamus, and rockhopper penguin. Many parrots, amphibians, bats and eagles are also listed as vulnerable, as are several trees, including the shea butter, sandalwood, red cedar and Brazil nut trees.

Since its establishment in 1963, the number of species covered by the Red List is increasing all the time: by 1988, it covered all bird species, and by 1996 all mammals were included. By 2007, 41,415 species worldwide had been assessed. The Red List is compiled by IUCN's Species Programme using data from the Species Survival Commission and other partners. It produces the Red List in cooperation with BirdLife International, the Zoological Society of London, Conservation International and Nature Serve. While the IUCN Red List is a global assessment, a number of countries have also developed their own national and regional red lists for plants and animals.

Labels

The European Ecolabel on Tourism Accommodation

This European Ecolabel is part of The European Ecolabel voluntary scheme, established in 1992 to encourage businesses to market products and services that are kinder to the environment. Tourism accommodation displaying this award:

- Limits energy consumption.
- Limits water consumption.
- Reduces waste production.
- Prefers the use of renewable resources and of substances which are less hazardous to the environment.
- Promotes environmental education and communication.

The physical structure shall respect all relevant laws existing in this area and in particular those related to biodiversity.

Biodiversity does not play a central role in the criteria (optional criteria on organic garden, composting and environmental communication and education on local biodiversity) but the requirements aim at reducing impacts of leisure organizations on the local environment. Local biodiversity therefore benefits from this ecolabel.

<http://www.traintoecolabel.org/>

Green Globe

Green Globe Certification is a global certification for sustainability and awards different businesses in the tourism sector: hotels, conference centres, attractions, transportation and travel, other tourism businesses, cruises and spas. Green Globe Certification is a member of the Tourism Sustainability Council (TSC). The TSC is the agreed international standard for the sustainable operation and management of travel and tourism businesses (see 2.4). The Green Globe Standard meets and exceeds all the requirements of the TSC. The environmental criteria include the conservation of biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes.

<http://www.greenglobe.com/>

Green Key

The Green Key® is a worldwide eco-label awarded to leisure organizations, such as hotels, youth hostels, conference and holiday centres, campsites, holiday houses and leisure facilities. To obtain The Green Key the company has to fulfil a list of environmental requirements. These requirements are contained in a number of criteria. Besides environmental demands (i.e. to control the production of waste and the use of water, electricity, etc.), the criteria include demands on policy, action plans, education and communication.

Each country develops national criteria consisting of all the international baseline criteria plus twenty percent national additions. National legislation, infrastructure, policies, and climate are taken into account when developing national additions. The national additions criteria ensures a national Green Key criteria set, which is adjusted to national and cultural characteristics.

The international baseline criteria are divided into 3 main areas: environmental management, communication and training and technical criteria.

Like the European Ecolabel, even if biodiversity is not at the focal point of criteria, the requirements aim at reducing impacts of leisure organizations on the local environment. Local biodiversity therefore benefits from this ecolabel.

<http://www.green-key.org/>

Golf Environment Organisation certification (GEO)

The Golf Environment Organization delivers a certification to golf courses through an environmental balance sheet. This certification is open to any facility and is awarded after an independent on-site verification. It aims continuous improvement.

The GEO Certification criteria cover seven main categories: Nature, Landscape & Heritage, Water, Turf, Waste Energy, Education & Awareness and Management Planning. The Nature category includes many biodiversity considerations such as baseline surveys on fauna, flora and habitats and an annotated list of key species found (rare or declining species and specially protected species). The certified golf course must moreover prove habitats creation/restoration projects as well as conservation measures for rare species.

This label provides in that regard one of the most advanced criteria for biodiversity conservation.

<http://www.golfenvironment.org/>

2.4. Main stakeholders

A selection of relevant stakeholders of the tourism and biodiversity sector is presented below.

- **Main international biodiversity conservation stakeholders**

CBD

The Convention on Biological Diversity created a platform to foster dialogue between tourism practitioners and disseminate support for the implementation of the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development.

<http://tourism.cbd.int/>

DG Environment

The Directorate-General for the Environment is one of the more than 40 Directorates-General and services that make up the European Commission. Commonly referred to as DG Environment, the objective of the Directorate-General is to protect, preserve and improve the environment for present and future generations. To achieve this, it proposes policies that ensure a high level of environmental protection in the European Union and that preserve the quality of life of EU citizens.

DG Environment makes sure that Member States correctly apply EU environmental law. In doing so, it investigates complaints made by citizens and non-governmental organizations and can take legal action when European Union law has been infringed. In certain cases DG Environment represents the European Union in environmental matters at international meetings such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

The DG also finances projects that contribute to environmental protection in the European Union. Since 1992, 2,600 projects have received financing from the LIFE+ programme - the European Union financial instrument for the environment.

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/environment/index_en.htm

UNEP

The UNEP tourism and environment sector mission is to mainstream sustainability into tourism development by demonstrating the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits of sustainable tourism. The specific case of biodiversity conservation is one of its core projects.

<http://www.unep.fr/scp/tourism/>

IUCN

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the world's oldest and largest global environmental network, is strongly involved in business and biodiversity links, and especially with regards to tourism.

http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp_our_work/tourism/

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy is the leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. The Nature Conservancy is developing partnerships with governments and organizations based in Europe to achieve mutual goals for global conservation.

<http://www.nature.org/>

Rainforest Alliance

The Rainforest Alliance is working to help tourism entrepreneurs conserve their environments and contribute to local livelihoods, while improving their own bottom line.

<http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/tourism.cfm?id=main>

WWF

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) shares a common goal with the tourism sector: the long-term preservation of the natural environment. WWF seeks to conserve nature while popular and marketable holidays rely, to a large extent, on the existence of attractive and clean destinations. These often occur in environmentally fragile areas that are biologically significant and rich in wildlife.

<http://www.wwf.org/>

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is a network-based organization that has pioneered the development of the world's most widely used sustainability reporting framework and is committed to its continuous improvement and application worldwide. In order to ensure the highest degree of technical quality, credibility, and relevance, the reporting framework is developed through a consensus-seeking process with participants drawn globally from business, civil society, labour, and professional institutions. Although different from the other organizations listed above, the Global Reporting Initiative includes biodiversity criteria and is used by many tourism companies to report.

<http://www.globalreporting.org/>

- **Main European or international tourism organizations**

The following organizations are tourism professional or non-professional organizations and have included in their goal or activities the concept of sustainable tourism.

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO/OMT) is a specialized agency of the United Nations and the leading international organization in the field of tourism. UNWTO plays a central and decisive role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

<http://www.world-tourism.org/>

http://www.unwto.org/frameset/frame_sustainable.html

European Tour Operators Association (ETOA)

ETOA was founded in 1989 by a group of tour operators who wanted representation in Europe. After 20 years, ETOA still remains the only trade association offering European level representation for the interests of inbound and intra-European tour operators, wholesalers and their European suppliers. ETOA represents over 450 Members.

<http://www.etoa.org/>

International Federation of Tour Operators (IFTO)

Members of IFTO, primary point of contact for European Tour Operators, act together to shape the industry and consumers' experience of tourism packages, working with governments and businesses in destinations across the world.

<http://www.ifto.eu.com/>

World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC)

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) is the forum for business leaders in the Travel & Tourism industry. With Chief Executives of some one hundred of the world's leading Travel & Tourism companies as its Members, WTTC has a unique mandate and overview on all matters related to Travel & Tourism, including the environment and biodiversity. The WTTC participates in the European Business and Biodiversity platform.

<http://www.wttc.org>
http://www.wttc.org/eng/Best_Practice_Gateway/index.php

International Hotel & Restaurant Association (IH&RA)

IH&RA – the International Hotel & Restaurant Association – is “the only global business organization representing the hospitality industry worldwide. Officially recognized by the United Nations, IH&RA monitors and lobbies all international agencies on behalf of this industry, estimated to comprise 300,000 hotels and 8 million restaurants, employ 60 million people and contribute 950 billion USD annually to the global economy.” The IHRA participates in the European Business and Biodiversity platform.

<http://www.ih-ra.com/>

- **Main European or international sustainable tourism and eco-tourism stakeholders**

The Tour Operators’ Initiative (TOI) for Sustainable Tourism Development

This initiative was launched by tour operators moving towards sustainable tourism by committing themselves to the concepts of sustainable development as the core of their business activity. They work together through common activities to promote and disseminate methods and practices compatible with sustainable development.

<http://www.toinitiative.org/>

Tourism Sustainability Council

This council originates from the merge of Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) and the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC) in 2009. Launched at the World Conservation Congress in October 2008, The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) are a set of 37 voluntary standards (including biodiversity conservation and interactions with wildlife criteria) representing the minimum that any tourism business should aspire to reach in order to protect and sustain the world’s natural and cultural resources, while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for poverty alleviation.

<http://www.sustainabletourismcriteria.org/>

ECOTRANS

ECOTRANS is a European network of experts and organizations in Tourism, Environment and regional development that are seeking to promote good practice in the field of sustainable Tourism.

<http://www.ecotrans.org/>

International Tourism Society (TIES)

TIES is the world's oldest and largest international ecotourism association. TIES seeks to be the global source of knowledge and advocacy uniting communities, conservation, and sustainable travel.

http://www.ecotourism.org/site/c.orLQKXPCLmF/b.4916707/k.2A9C/Contact_Us.htm

National Geographic’s Centre for Sustainable Destinations

Created by the Research, Conservation, and Exploration Division of National Geographic Mission Programs, Centre for Sustainable Destinations (CSD) programs are dedicated to protecting the world’s distinctive places through wisely managed tourism and enlightened destination stewardship.

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/index.html>

- **Tourism companies and organizations participating to the platform**

The tourism sector includes several types of companies. The companies are focused on one or several aspects of tourism, including transportation, accommodation, tour operation, regional management and provision of tourism services. Tourism companies will be represented through traditional tourism players (i.e. operator of hotels, tour operators, travel agencies and tourism services providers), which include a sustainability dimension in their activities, and specific attention will be paid to ecotourism activities.

ACCOR

Accor is a French multinational corporation, the European leader in hotels (Accor Hospitality) and a global leader in corporate services (Accor Services). Through its Earth Guest policy founded on 8 priorities, Accor is committed to growing the well-being of the earth's population and to preserving the planet's resources. Biodiversity is a priority with the implementation of procurement and green space management practices that respect biodiversity and the increase of employee and guest awareness through partnerships with associations.

<http://www.accor.com>

European Golf Association Golf Course Committee

The EGA GCC brings together the interests of the game of golf in Europe on matters of environmental sustainability and biodiversity. The Committee represents the European Golf Association (EGA), the European Golf Course Owners Association (EGCOA), the European Institute of Golf Course Architects (EIGCA), the Federation of European Golf Greenkeeper Associations (FEGGA), the PGA European Tour, the Professional Golfers' Associations of Europe (PGAs of Europe), the Club Managers Association of Europe (CMAE) and The R&A. Golf tourism plays an important role in the economy of a number of European countries.

<http://www.ega-golf.ch/>

Pierre & Vacances Center Parcs Group

With about 400 destinations, offerings and a portfolio of brands, the Pierre & Vacances-Center Parcs Group plays a big role in the European tourism landscape. Its economic model based on the synergies between tourism and property development means it is now at the forefront of innovation, especially in terms of sustainable development.

<http://www.groupepvcp.com/>

http://www.pierreetvacances.com/static_usr/pvhd/b2c/img/_cd/pv/media/index.html

Polish Tourism Development Agency SA

Polish Tourism Development Agency SA (PART) is an institution with a status body governed by public law. PART advises administration and local authorities in matters relating to regional development, especially by developing tourism. Its mission is to increase the competitiveness of Polish regions and to support them in their aspiration to become well developed and well managed, pursuing the best EU practices. PART is the lead partner of the B2N project ("BUSINESS TO NATURE – Interregional Approach to SMEs and Entrepreneurship in Natural Areas") which aims to contribute to the economic and sustainable development of European regions by demonstrating and promoting best practices in entrepreneurship development in natural areas.

<http://business2nature.eu/>

3. Classification and evaluation of available best practices

3.1. Common approach and key steps of biodiversity integration in business

Economic activity is one of the major drivers of biodiversity loss, however Europe is still losing biodiversity at an alarming rate. Key direct drivers of biodiversity decline are habitat change, climate change, invasive species, over-exploitation and pollution. Business can help reduce these pressures by managing and mitigating their impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services. They should systematically review their operations in relation to biodiversity and ecosystem services (BES) and assess how direct and indirect drivers of change in ecosystem services may affect their business according to TEEB – The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity Report for Business.

Practically, all businesses have an impact on biodiversity, either through their supply chains or the investments they make. The links between business, biodiversity and ecosystem services vary across and even within sectors. These links depend on the location of the business, the source of its raw materials, in some cases the location of its customers, and/or the production technology employed. Broadly, these links can be grouped into business impacts on biodiversity, on the one hand, and business dependence on ecosystem services, on the other.

3.1.1. The business case for biodiversity and ecosystems

Biodiversity business is defined as: “Commercial enterprise that generates profits through production processes which conserve biodiversity, use biological resources sustainably and share the benefits arising out of this use equitably.”

This definition reflects the three over-arching goals of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which also calls for increased efforts to enlist the private sector in biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and equitable benefit sharing. In both the environmental and business communities, there is a growing recognition of the potential to conserve biodiversity on a commercial basis.

The business case for biodiversity is easy to make when a company depends directly on biodiversity for its operation. Nature-based tourism is one example where companies' income depends on the health of the surrounding ecosystem. In such cases, business owners and managers need little persuasion to invest in biodiversity management. For businesses that are not directly and apparently dependent on ecosystem services, the emphasis needs to be on how biodiversity and ecosystem services (BES) can indirectly affect their core business.

3.1.2. The key action points for business (according to the TEEB for Business report)

The business case for biodiversity and ecosystems is getting stronger. Companies which understand and manage the risks presented by biodiversity loss and ecosystem decline and move quickly to seize business opportunities are the ones most likely to thrive.

Business can show leadership on biodiversity and ecosystems:

- 1. Identify the impacts and dependencies of your business on biodiversity and ecosystem services (BES).** The first step is to assess business impacts and dependencies on biodiversity and ecosystems, including both direct and indirect linkages throughout the value chain, using existing tools while also helping to improve them.
- 2. Assess the business risks and opportunities associated with these impacts and dependencies.** Based on this assessment, companies can identify the business risks and opportunities associated with their impacts and dependencies on BES, and educate their employees, owners, suppliers and customers. Economic valuation of BES impacts and dependencies can help to clarify risks and opportunities.

3. **Develop BES information systems, set SMART targets, measure and value performance, and report your results.** Biodiversity and ecosystem strategies for business are likely to include an improved corporate information system, the development of quantitative BES targets and performance indicators, and their integration into wider business risk and opportunity management processes. A key step for building trust among external stakeholders, while creating peer pressure within the industry, is for business to measure and report their BES impacts, actions and outcomes.
4. **Take action to avoid, minimize and mitigate BES risks, including in-kind compensation ('offsets') where feasible.** BES targets may build on the concepts of 'No Net Loss', 'Ecological Neutrality' or 'Net Positive Impact' and include support for biodiversity offsets where appropriate. Industry associations will continue to play a key role in developing and promoting robust and effective biodiversity performance standards and prepare mitigation guidelines for their members.
5. **Grasp emerging BES business opportunities, such as cost-efficiencies, new products and new markets.** Business can support the growth of green markets and can help design efficient enabling conditions for biodiversity and ecosystem service markets, which may lead to the diversification of tourism product and complements the efforts to fight seasonality of the tourism offer. Such opportunities may be facilitated by engaging public agencies, accountancy and financial standardisation bodies, conservation organizations and communities.
6. **Integrate business strategy and actions on BES within wider corporate social responsibility initiatives.** There is potential to enhance both biodiversity status and human livelihoods, and help reduce global poverty, through the integration of BES in corporate sustainability and community engagement strategies.
7. **Engage with business peers and stakeholders in government, NGOs and civil society to improve BES guidance and policy.** Business can bring significant capacity to conservation efforts and has a key role to play in halting biodiversity loss. Business needs to participate more actively in public policy discussions to advocate appropriate regulatory reforms, as well as to develop complementary voluntary guidelines.

3.2. Sector specific approach to implement Business & Biodiversity actions

Some tools and guidance already exist at sector level that can help companies to implement part of the TEEB recommendations regarding impact assessment, risk & opportunities and stakeholder involvement issues. Compensation, new markets and strategy integration of biodiversity in a wider CSR framework are rarely integrated at this stage.

The different sub sectors of tourism activities described before have developed some examples dealing with: tourism activities in a dedicated natural area, implementing ecotourism projects, assessing tourism potential & biodiversity implication of a project, guiding hotels and restaurants in integrating biodiversity in their operations.

The existing reviewed documents generally address biodiversity issues at a global scale. They do not approach nor support the consideration of local biodiversity issues. Moreover, required implementation costs and means are not in general specified and local contacts are not provided, what represents a concrete barrier especially for independent tourism accommodation owners and small companies.

3.3. Classification and analysis of existing best practices

3.3.1. Introduction to the Analysis Grid

The selected best practices are analyzed according to different criteria (e.g. their relevance to the sector, their efficiency recognition, etc.) enabling companies to choose the relevant approach according to their level of progress regarding biodiversity conservation actions. An analysis grid is used to that end and comprises five main categories.

The first category concerns the “**characteristics**” and gives a quick overview of the best practice to the reader. A short description is given, as well as answers to the following questions:

- Who and for whom has it been designed (which sector and users)?
- Has this initiative been used by a wide panel of companies?
- Is it possible to quantify the results?

The second part, “**scope**”, helps the reader to rapidly identify the value chain scope of the approach and at which stage of the project it can be used. It addresses the following points:

- Is this best practice covering only the enterprise, the upstream or downstream value chain?
- When to use this best practice? Which progress step does it address (definition of strategy, concrete action, impact assessments, etc.)?

A third part named “**benefits**” tackles the results obtained:

- Does the best practice take into account or analyse:
 - The ecological benefits on biodiversity threats (habitat loss and degradation, invasive species, climate change, pollution and overexploitation)?
 - The financial benefits (cost reduction, reputation and brand value, security of supply, innovation, sales and prices, risk mitigation)?
 - The social benefits (for employees as well as local communities or other associations and NGOs)?

The part on “**success factors**” is devoted to the companies which are interested in replicating the approach:

- What level of human and financial resources has to be provided?
- Does the tool describe the factors allowing efficiency and success for the approach implementation?
- What are the limits of the approach?

A set of global/sectoral best practices to facilitate biodiversity integration into business has been developed over the years. Through the following analysis grid, we have classified the selected best practices to help companies navigate and select the most appropriate material for its specific goals and issues.

3.3.2 Selected general best practices

Two tools were selected as general best practices:

- The Corporate Ecosystem Services Review¹ (ESR) - developed by the WBCSD/WRI - which consists of a structured methodology that helps managers proactively develop strategies to manage business risks and opportunities arising from their company’s dependence and impacts on ecosystems.
- The Business and Biodiversity Interdependence Indicator¹ (BBII) developed in 2006 by Orée¹ in the report “Integrating biodiversity into business strategy”. The analysis chart includes about twenty criteria leading to five composite indicators characterizing the interactions between biodiversity and businesses.

Best practice characteristics

	Corporate Ecosystems Services Review (ESR)	Business and Biodiversity Interdependence Indicator (BBII) (Orée)
Methodology type (guide, assessment tool, method)	Self-assessment tool and method	Self-assessment tool and guide
Level of approach (sectoral)	Global approach	Global approach

or global)		
National or international initiative	International initiative	National initiative (France)
Targeted user (company, investors, other)	Companies	Companies
Creation date	Recent initiative, published in 2008	Recent initiative, published in 2008
Type of initiative founders and contributors (organization/companies involved/size)	WRI (World Resource Institute), WBCSD, Meridian Institute	Orée, FRB (French Foundation for Research on Biodiversity)
Spread scope of the initiative / Replication potential	Method applicable to all types of companies. Toolkit designed to be replicated: excel questionnaire to assess the company dependences and impacts on ecosystems	Designed for all types of companies. The indicators can be applied to semi-finished or finished goods or to companies' operations, in case of a group or a multinational company
Possibility to quantify results/benefits	Yes	Yes

The ESR approach is the only methods that makes available a ready-to-use tool (report and excel questionnaire) allowing companies to assess their dependence and impacts on ecosystems. External support is also provided through training sessions, community network and consultants. The BBII proposes a self-assessment method leading to a unique interdependency indicator based on 23 criteria, as well as economic analysis and thoughts from economists and French companies from different sectors on an accounting system taking into account biodiversity.

Scope

		Corporate Ecosystems Services Review (ESR)	Business and Biodiversity Interdependence Indicator (BBII) (Orée)
Value chain scope	Suppliers	Yes	Yes
	Corporate	Yes	Yes
	Customers	Yes	Yes
Covered steps	Priority ecosystem services identification	Yes	Yes
	Risk and opportunity assessment	Yes	Yes
	Strategy definition	Yes	Yes
	Actions	Yes	No

The ESR and the BBII methods can be used for an assessment of the business dependency on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

ESR leads companies step by step up to definition and monitoring of their strategy and action plan. The BBII gives economic thoughts on integrating enterprise economy into global ecosystems and may be less practical to define and implement a strategy at company level. However, this tool proposes a complete monitoring and accounting tool ("bilan biodiversité") which may lead to a complete reform of accountability.

Benefits

	Corporate Ecosystems Services Review (ESR)	Business and Biodiversity Interdependence Indicator (BBII) (Orée)
Ecological services/Threats	Yes	Yes

on biodiversity		
Financial/Economic benefits	Yes	Yes
Social benefits	n.a.	

The ESR method considers all impacts on biodiversity but businesses are encouraged to select priority ecosystem services.

As for the BBII approach, it includes five types of criteria:

- Criteria directly related to living systems.
- Criteria related to business strategies.
- Criteria related to current markets.
- Criteria related to compensatory measures.
- Criteria related to impacts on biodiversity.

Through these criteria, most environmental or financial benefits are covered.

None of these initiatives focuses specifically on social impacts.

Success factors

	Corporate Ecosystems Services Review (ESR)	Business and Biodiversity Interdependence Indicator (BBII) (Orée)
Financial resources needed	Low to high	Low to medium
Human resources needed	Medium	
Level of governance needed	Medium to high	
Possible economic support (public grants, etc)	No information	No information
Limits of the approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The results of the assessment are not standardized. 2. A risk/opportunity approach is used for selecting priority ecosystem services, thus leading to the potential consideration of only some ecosystem services. 	The results of the assessment are not standardized. No absolute value.

Companies can easily use the ESR tool and implement it internally (complete and practical method as well as a free excel sheet tool). In addition, if this method is brought to fruition biodiversity conservation actions would be implemented and concrete results would be obtained. However, this method might need some expert support (internal or external through consultancy to ensure the most efficient outputs for the company). External training might need an important human and financial investment to be implemented within a company.

Since the BBII approach is a self-assessment leading to one final score by criterion, the results between different companies may be difficult to compare if not done by the same people because of the potential subjectivity of responses to some criteria (results will depend on the perception and knowledge of the assessor).

3.3.3 Best practices specific to the tourism sector

The following 5 best practices have been analysed and classified from the oldest to the most recent:

- **Hotel Biodiversity Operational Guidelines "Biodiversity: My hotel in action":** Jointly with Accor, one of the leading hotel companies in the world, IUCN has explored the contribution that hotels can make to conservation and enhancement of biodiversity through their day-to-day operations. It was released in 2008.
Read more at: http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_hotel_guide_final.pdf
- **Wildlife Watching and Tourism. UNEP/CMS:** A study on the benefits and risks of wildlife watching - a fast-growing tourism activity - and its impacts on species was released in 2006.
Read more at: http://www.cms.int/publications/pdf/CMS_WildlifeWatching.pdf
- **CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and user's manual:** Published by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2003, it provides international guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development in vulnerable terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems and habitats of major importance for biological diversity and protected areas, including fragile riparian and mountain ecosystems.¹
Read more at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/programmes/tourism/tourism-manual-en.pdf>
- **Tourism and biodiversity - Mapping Tourism's global footprint:** This UNEP publication published in 2003 shows the link between biodiversity hotspots and tourism, both in terms of threats and opportunities.
Read more at: http://www.unep.org/PDF/Tourism_and_biodiversity_report.pdf
- **Linking Communities, Tourism & Conservation: A Tourism Assessment Process. Conservation International:** Conservation International presents one of the topics addressed during its participatory workshops. It has been designed for field practitioners to perform a rapid assessment and analysis of tourism potential in a destination. It was published in 2005.
Read more at: http://www.conservation.org/Documents/CI_ecotourism_tourism_assessment_process_manual.pdf

3.3.4 Characteristics of each best practice

	Biodiversity My Hotel in Action	Wildlife watching and tourism	Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism	Tourism and Biodiversity – Mapping Tourism's Global Footprint	Linking Communities, Tourism & Conservation, A tourism assessment process
Targeted User (company, investors, other)	Hotel managers	Any entity wishing to develop wildlife watching based tourism	Policy makers, decision makers and managers with responsibilities covering tourism and/or biodiversity	Protected area managers, local or national authorities, tourism managers	Protected area managers, local or national authorities, tourism managers
Durability of the initiative	Published in 2008	Published in 2006	Published in 2004, with the user's guide	Published in 2003	Published in 2003
Type of initiative founders and contributors (organization / companies involved / size)	Partnership between IUCN, ACCOR and IH&RA	Partnership between UNEP, CMS (Convention on Migratory Species) and the travel group TUI	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	UNEP & Conservation International	Conservation International & the George Washington University
Scope of the initiative / Replication potential	Designed for any kind of accommodation	Designed for any entity within the tourism sector	Designed as guidelines for tourism management	General report on the global impacts of tourism on	Toolkit designed to be replicated

				biodiversity and main stakeholders	
Possibility to quantify the results/benefits	Not detailed	No	Yes	No	No

All initiatives are international and can be applied in every suitable location.

They target different audiences in both the public and private sectors. However, all initiatives are dedicated to high level decision makers and hardly to local managers, except for “Biodiversity: My Hotel in Action”.

They were all published in the last decade, from 2003 to 2008. The Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development from the CBD were a first milestone in the sector, and other initiatives were written in accordance with these Guidelines (for example, Tourism and Biodiversity – Mapping Tourism’s Global Footprint).

They all originate from at least one NGO or an institution, and rarely from collaboration with companies. The Accor, IUCN and IH&RA guide on hotels is the only one resulting from a business and NGO partnership.

These initiatives often require a high stakeholder involvement, except for guides describing concrete on-site actions (“Biodiversity: My Hotel in Action”).

These reviewed best practices generally do not provide the possibility to quantify results.

Scope

		Biodiversity My Hotel in Action	Wildlife watching and tourism	Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism	Tourism and Biodiversity – Mapping Tourism’s Global Footprint	Linking Communities, Tourism & Conservation, A tourism assessment process
Value Chain Scope	Suppliers	Yes	NA	No	No	Yes
	Corporate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Customers	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Covered Steps	Priority ecosystem services identification	Yes	Yes	Partially	No	No
	Risks & opportunities assessments	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
	Strategy definition	Yes	Yes		Yes	No
	Actions	Yes	No		No	No

The simplified value chain is here considered to be suppliers – corporate – customers. The two studied best practices explore consequences on the whole value chain from certifications of goods sold or used in restaurants to raising awareness among customers at the end of the chain. This is the case for “Biodiversity: My Hotel in Action” and “Linking Communities Tourism & Conservation”. The others do not cover the whole supply chain focusing on the corporate part.

The four main steps of an approach to biodiversity conservation considered here are:

- Identifying priority ecosystem services.
- Assessing risks and opportunities.

- Defining strategy.
- Defining actions.

These four steps are unequally covered by the initiatives. Only the guide “Biodiversity: My Hotel in Action” fully addresses these steps.

The other best practices are focused on the first steps and therefore provide upstream consideration. This is linked to the targeted audience (decisions makers, managers; local or national authorities) and to the high involvement of stakeholders required (local authorities, local communities).

The lack of practical actions in this type of documents can be explained by the fact that detailed case studies are not integrated in those approaches. It is clearly a shortcoming of the current existing literature on the subject because it does not consider concrete case studies according to a range of specific local biodiversity issues.

Benefits

	Biodiversity My Hotel in Action	Wildlife watching and tourism	Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism	Tourism and Biodiversity – Mapping Tourism’s Global Footprint	Linking Communities, Tourism & Conservation, A tourism assessment process
Ecological services/Threats on biodiversity	Most	Partially	All	All	All
Financial / Economic benefits	All	Most	All	Partially	All
Social Benefits	All	Most	All	Most	All

All initiatives cover the main threats to biodiversity since they are general methods and not dedicated to one specific threat. Wildlife watching tourism has its main impacts on species disturbance, habitat degradation and pollution. Only these threats are therefore highlighted in this guide.

There are several financial and economic benefits derived from biodiversity conservation in tourism. Initiatives do not address all of them, except in case of rather general guidelines on biodiversity and tourism development, the Tourism Assessment process, and the “Biodiversity: My Hotel in Action” guide which considers all economic consequences of bringing biodiversity conservation into hotel management.

Success Factors

	Biodiversity My Hotel in Action	Wildlife watching and tourism	Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism	Tourism and Biodiversity – Mapping Tourism’s Global Footprint	Linking Communities, Tourism & Conservation, A tourism assessment process
Financial resources needed	Low to high	High	High	NA	NA
Human resources needed	Low to high	High	High	NA	Small
Level of governance needed	Medium	Medium to high	Medium to high	High	Low
Limits of the	Difficulty to	No cost/benefit	This approach	Global	Not available

approach	spread the initiative to small hotels. Not focused on regional / local biodiversity issues	analysis of all activities implied for wildlife watching (facilities, means of transportation, etc.)	remains global to target every aspect but does not provide anything immediately applicable	overview of tourism and its impacts	
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The financial and human resources needed to implement such initiatives are high for global and general initiatives but small for actions or assessments at local scale. These criteria do not apply for reports such as “Mapping tourism’s global footprint”. Since most of the initiatives are global, the level of governance needed is often medium to high. These initiatives do not cover everyday decisions and require comprehensive planning.

None of these initiatives is subsidized by any organisation or authority.

No information is available so far on the use of these best practices since their publication.

4. Case studies

The following case studies have been prepared by participants in the EU B@B Platform for the workshop held in Brussels in September, 2010.

4.1. The Ljunghusen Golf club in Sweden and the 10 steps-guideline of the European Golf Association Golf Course Committee

This golf course is certified by the Golf Environment Organisation Certification. Ljunghusens GK lies within a heathland-dominated coastal nature reserve. Constant improvements to the management of the landscape are being carried out. No alien grass species are used on the course and since the 1980’s fertilizer use has been reduced by about 80%. Pesticides are used only when necessary. Sophisticated recycling has been introduced and all hazardous waste is taken care of. The facility is continuously trying to improve its energy saving capacity and the oil consumption has been reduced by 90%, much due to the use of geothermal heating sources. The facility provides environmental education for staff and committee members and maintains effective partnerships.

The 10 steps-guideline aiming at protecting, enhancing and restoring biodiversity on golf courses launched by the European Golf Association Golf Course Committee dedicated for golf courses all over Europe was discussed with the European Commission.

<http://www.golfenvironment.org/certification/participating-facilities/SE/63/verifiers-report>

4.2. Pierre & Vacances Center Parks Group (PVCP Group) biodiversity strategy

The business model of the PVCP has three distinct brands: Property Development, Tourism and Property Sales. This specific business model has a big influence on the biodiversity policy of the PVCP Group. The biodiversity policy follows two main aspects: property development (focused on new sites) and tourism (focusing on existing sites and their surrounding areas). For each aspect, specific practices are implemented.

4.3. Polish Tourism Development Agency leader of the Business to Nature initiative

The B2N project (“BUSINESS TO NATURE – Interregional Approach to SMEs and Entrepreneurship in Natural Areas”) is a new initiative co-financed under the INTERREG IVC

program, which aims to contribute to the economic and sustainable development of European regions by demonstrating and promoting best practices in entrepreneurship development in natural areas.

The initiative gathers 11 region partners in 9 countries. In these regions, environment is the basis for development.

<http://www.business2nature.eu/index.php?lang=en>

5. Gaps and needs: Best practices analysis in the sector

The gaps and needs analysis covers use and applications of existing best practices as well as needs for additional guideline. This part has been completed thanks to companies' participation and according to their perceptions of what is strongly needed.

The Analysis Grid developed for this guidance aims at analyzing existing documents to enable companies to have a good overview at a glance, without reading the entire document. Participants showed interest in this grid since they had already tried to develop the same kind of grid or use the same kind of criteria.

According to the B@B Platform participants, there are enough guidelines and other reports for the sector, but it is sometimes difficult to navigate and use them. Therefore, having such a report providing all needed information in a condensed manner is useful. No real further development is needed since the guidance should not be too long, but easy to go through in order to draw the needed information.

Participants all agreed on what can work better for next steps within the B@B Platform. Networking and the spreading of good practices is the recipe for success. Users should be able to post their best practices. Furthermore, the Platform should provide concrete and up-to-date information or links (species list, CITES restriction on species trade, etc.). There is also a need for concrete answers that companies can directly apply (i.e. who to contact in a region for a specific biodiversity issue). An up-to-date web-based directory that lists experts, local operators, according to issues, regions of Europe, etc. would be a good solution. Networking is the key point for the Platform to work and to be useful to businesses.

Reaching SMEs is another concern, since 80% of tourism companies are SMEs. Other initiatives such as Business2Nature face the same problem of reaching SMEs. Initiatives can both learn from each other's experiences.

A recognized award could also prove to be an important part of the B@B Platform. Special attention must therefore be paid to the implementation of the award.

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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