

BUSINESS ADVISORY GROUP (BAG) MEETING 3 on 29 August 2024

“Strengthening Business Contributions to National Biodiversity Strategies”



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Introduction

The first and second Business Advisory Group (BAG) meetings, held on 22 May 2024 and 25 July 2024, focused on Target 15, “*Businesses Assess, Disclose and Reduce Biodiversity-Related Risks and Negative Impacts*”, and exploring the remaining 22 Kunming-Montreal GBF targets, with a particular emphasis on business contributions towards these targets.

The third BAG meeting, held on 29 August 2024, was a hybrid event, with 5 people attending in-person at the Glencore offices in Melrose Arch, Johannesburg, and 21 people attending online. This workshop was focused on strengthening business contributions to national biodiversity strategies, while ensuring that businesses had the chance to hear any updates on the progress of revising South Africa’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). Additionally, this meeting served as a platform for businesses to interact with representatives from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and to engage about their roles and contributions in the revision of South Africa’s NBSAP.

The main session included a presentation on how five companies have aligned with the 23 targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework in their most recent reports, a comparison of business inclusion in the available updated NBSAPs of other countries, and an overview of SANBI’s process of contributing to South Africa’s revised NBSAP. This was followed by a breakout session, allowing representatives to discuss the current actions taken by their companies to contribute to protected areas, restoration initiatives, compliance monitoring, biodiversity awareness, and capacity building.

In this draft report, we have highlighted some of the key points that emerged during the discussions and the breakout session.

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the key discussions and outcomes from the 3rd Business Advisory Group (BAG) meeting, which was themed ‘Strengthening Business Contributions to National Biodiversity Strategies’, with a focus on NBSAP’s.

The theme of capacity building was again a strong point of discussion with further mentions of the need for training, skills development and story-telling. Participants again emphasized the need for an online repository containing South African biodiversity-disclosure legislation and practical resources on the basics of biodiversity.

Businesses also called for sector-specific guidance on actions and tools tailored to their industries. Additionally, businesses need clear guidance on how to effectively support protected areas, including metrics and progress measurement. The discussions highlighted the importance of providing businesses with resources, sector guidance, and measurable goals to enhance their biodiversity contributions. In this report and specifically on page 15, we highlight the alignments with the GBF targets that are emerging from of the BAG’s. High-level initial insights point towards key themes coming out of the BAG’s being Capacity Building, and Ecosystem Management, with KM-GBF targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20 emerging quite strongly from the discussion points, key themes, challenges and suggested action points.

These insights play a pivotal role in the development and structure of the Business and Biodiversity Action Roadmap to inform government of business progress in aligning with national biodiversity targets and the GBF, as well as the challenges, gaps and needs that businesses are still facing.

Key themes

Businesses need guidance on **what it actually means to support protected areas** effectively, based on metrics – what is the goal and how can progress towards it be measured?

Businesses would benefit from **sector-specific guidance** on what actions they can take and what tools are available and most suitable based on their specific sector.

Many businesses would find it useful for the online repository to have biodiversity-disclosure-related South African legislation as well as **more impactful content on the basics of biodiversity** and framing the **importance of biodiversity** in a business context to drive action.

Businesses are at different levels in terms of their biodiversity plans and actions. Some would **benefit from case studies which provide an idea of where to start**, and others would **benefit from relevant hard data** which would help them better shape the direction of their current actions and plans.



Challenges businesses are facing

Table 1 – Mining sector Challenges and Recommendations:

Challenge	Explanation	Suggested Recommendation/s
Outdated data on species & a lack of continuous monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining companies face challenges due to outdated data from academic studies conducted many years ago. This leads to limitations in their ability to make informed decisions on species conservation, as the behaviour and habitat needs of specific species may have changed since these studies were conducted. • Lack of follow-up assessments after academic research is completed creates gaps in biodiversity knowledge. This is often due to students coming in, conducting a research project and then leaving, with no continuous work being conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with research institutions for updated studies • Long-term monitoring programmes • Engage with NGO's and conservation organizations • Utilize technology for real-time data collection • Develop a centralized data repository • Fund postgraduate research with a focus on biodiversity • Collaborate with government for data updates (SANBI website)
Balancing transparency and sensitivity	<p>There is a growing need to balance the transparency of conservation efforts with the risk of exposing sensitive information, such as species location maps. Transparency of this type of information could lead to illegal activities, such as poaching or illegal trade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled access to sensitive data • Use aggregated or generalized data in public reports • Develop confidentiality agreements with stakeholders • Engage in stakeholder education on data risks and protections • Regular risk assessments for data disclosure
Alignment of biodiversity metrics with disclosure requirements	<p>Mining companies face challenges in aligning biodiversity data collection (e.g., using IBAT and STAR tools) with disclosure requirements. They want to ensure that the data they collect and report on is meaningful and contributes to national and international biodiversity goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with national and international biodiversity organizations and other businesses • Ongoing dialogue with government • Consider up-to-date training on biodiversity reporting tools and requirements • Seek out success case stories from similar companies

Challenges businesses are facing

Table 2 – Agricultural sector Challenges and Recommendations:

Challenge	Explanation	Recommendation/s
Focus on habitat over species	While agricultural companies prioritize habitat conservation, they face challenges in balancing this focus with species-specific needs. There is a need to integrate species management into their broader habitat conservation strategies to ensure species of conservation concern are adequately protected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop integrated habitat and species management plans • Collaborate with wildlife experts and conservationists • Use technology to monitor both habitat and species health • Prioritize species of conservation concern within habitat management • Educate staff and stakeholders on species-specific needs • Regularly review and update conservation strategies based on species data
Water catchment protection	Protecting water catchments is a challenge in agricultural areas, where the competing demands of agricultural production and water conservation create tension. Managing water resources sustainably while maintaining productivity is a complex challenge for agricultural companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement integrated water resource management • Adopt water-efficient irrigation technologies • Develop catchment-specific water management plans • Collaborate with local water conservation authorities and NGO's like the Mvula Trust. • Invest in water recycling and rainwater harvesting systems
Balancing biodiversity conservation and productivity	Agricultural companies face challenges in finding solutions that address both biodiversity conservation and agricultural productivity. This includes identifying the right tools and strategies that can be applied to farming practices to achieve both objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a sustainability assessment • Implement operational plans <i>ito</i> water, energy, soil, waste, site development, GIS plans etc... • Constructed wetlands to prevent pollution of natural watercourses • Siltation prevention mechanisms to conserve natural watercourses • Pesticide & chemical rinse water treatment • Permits for invasive trees in windrows, bee forage & woodlots • Indigenous Landscaping and ecological Restoration • Constructed habitat (owl boxes, bat houses, insect hotels, natural beehives, floating wetlands)

Challenges businesses are facing

Table 3 – Financial sector Challenges and Recommendations:

Challenge	Explanation	Recommendation/s
Lack of sector-specific tools and guidance	Financial institutions recognize that biodiversity tools and solutions differ by sector, but they face challenges in creating and applying the right tools for each sector (e.g., mining, agriculture, energy). Developing sector-specific financial products that meaningfully support biodiversity goals is an ongoing challenge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish cross-sector collaborations • Develop a sector-specific biodiversity toolkit • Engage in pilot projects for biodiversity finance • Offer incentives for sustainable practices • Invest in capacity building and training
Measuring success in biodiversity initiatives	Financial companies face challenges in determining how to measure success in biodiversity initiatives. Defining clear metrics and understanding what constitutes success—whether it’s through measurable environmental outcomes or increased corporate transparency—remains an area of difficulty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop standardized biodiversity metrics • Adopt a framework for measuring environmental outcomes • Incorporate biodiversity metrics into ESG reporting • Engage with stakeholders to define success criteria • Implement regular monitoring and impact assessments
Mainstreaming biodiversity in finance	Financial companies are grappling with how to mainstream biodiversity into their operations and investments. This involves not only offering biodiversity-related financial products but also ensuring that internal decision-making and risk management processes fully integrate biodiversity considerations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate biodiversity into risk assessment frameworks • Develop biodiversity-focused investment policies • Incorporate biodiversity criteria into loan and investment decisions • Provide internal training on biodiversity integration • Collaborate with biodiversity experts and organizations

Challenges businesses are facing

Table 4 –Cross-sectoral Challenges and Recommendations:

Challenge	Explanation	Recommendation/s
Data gaps and accessibility	<p>Across all sectors, there are significant gaps in biodiversity data, especially related to species behavior and habitat needs. Accessing up-to-date, relevant data for making informed decisions on biodiversity management is a common challenge, particularly when relying on outdated academic studies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a centralized biodiversity data repository • Collaborate with research institutions for updated studies • Leverage technology for real-time data collection • Develop public-private biodiversity monitoring partnerships • Support continuous long-term ecological research
Training and capacity building	<p>Many sectors struggle with the need for comprehensive biodiversity training. While companies are starting to roll out capacity-building programs, there is a need for more widespread access to training materials and better integration of biodiversity education into business operations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sector-specific biodiversity training programmes • Create an online biodiversity training platform • Incorporate biodiversity into existing corporate training • Partner with environmental NGOs for expert-led workshops • Promote peer learning and knowledge sharing networks
Balancing business needs with conservation goals	<p>Companies are facing challenges which include the need to balance their operational needs such as production and profitability with biodiversity conservation goals.</p> <p>For example, agricultural companies must find a way to maintain balance between agricultural output and habitat conservation, while mining companies need to manage and lessen their environmental impact without compromising their output levels and profitability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt integrated resource management plans • Implement adaptive management practices • Incorporate biodiversity offsetting and restoration programmes • Develop biodiversity-friendly business models • Utilize incentives for sustainable practices

Feedback from all sectors in terms of their progress to support biodiversity targets

Table 5: Feedback and comments from sectors:

Area	Description of Support Efforts	Identified GBF Target alignment
Habitat conservation efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of nature reserves by partnering with local NGOs and reserve management; • Demonstrations of commitments to stewardship and areas being set aside for conservation; • Prioritization of the conservation of specific habitats on areas like land holdings rather than focusing on individual species; • Properties declared as conservancies. 	<p>T1 – Promotes spatial planning that respects biodiversity in land and sea areas.</p> <p>T3 - Conserve 30% of Land, Waters and Seas.</p> <p>T11 - Restore, maintain and enhance nature’s contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services.</p>
Biodiversity roadmaps and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of roadmaps with goals to have a fully operational biodiversity management framework by 2026; • Annual biodiversity performance reports; 	<p>T15 - Encourages businesses to assess, monitor, and disclose their biodiversity impacts, including conservation efforts.</p> <p>T10 - Sustainable use of biodiversity resources in key sectors (e.g., agriculture, forestry).</p> <p>T14 - Integration of biodiversity into sector-specific policies and practices.</p>

Feedback from all sectors in terms of their progress to support biodiversity targets

Table 5: Feedback and comments from sectors:

Area	Description of Support Efforts	Identified GBF Target alignment
Species-specific action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies are developing species-specific action plans; Collaborating with external consultants and conservation bodies. 	T4 - Halting human-induced extinction and ensuring species recovery.
Capacity building and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies are engaging in capacity-building exercises by developing online training material for both senior management and technical teams; Biodiversity statements that measure material changes in ecosystems, helping companies track their impact over time. 	T19 - Increase knowledge-sharing and financial support for biodiversity conservation. T20 - Promote the exchange of information, knowledge, and technology, with a focus on practical applications.
Tailored solutions for different sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledgement of the importance of sector-specific financial and other related solutions, as there are specific environmental challenges and opportunities of each sector. 	T15 - Encourages businesses to assess, monitor, and disclose their biodiversity impacts, including conservation efforts. T19 - Increase knowledge-sharing and financial support for biodiversity conservation.

Feedback from all sectors in terms of their progress to support biodiversity targets

Table 5: Feedback and comments from sectors:

Area	Description of Support Efforts	GBF Target alignment
Data and tools for biodiversity management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies are using tools like IBAT (Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool) and STAR metrics to assess the impact of their operations on Red List species and identify mitigation measures; • Exploration of ways to offer conservation-based outcome bonds and other financial products that support biodiversity; • Companies are looking at metrics that may include biodiversity performance indicators, such as species conservation outcomes, habitat protection achievements, or even the degree to which corporate disclosures raise awareness and support for biodiversity issues. 	<p>T15 - Encourage businesses to assess and disclose their biodiversity impacts, aligning with biodiversity-disclosure legislation.</p> <p>T20 - Promote the exchange of information, knowledge, and technology, with a focus on practical applications</p> <p>T21 - Ensure that knowledge is available and accessible to guide biodiversity action</p> <p>T19 - Increase knowledge-sharing and financial support for biodiversity conservation.</p>
Contributions to strategic plans and disclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies acknowledge the importance of aligning biodiversity actions with formal disclosure requirements and strategic plans; • Internal acknowledgement of and efforts being made to define what mainstreaming biodiversity looks like, such as biodiversity-related financial products and partnerships, that can contribute to biodiversity goals. 	<p>T15 - Encourage businesses to assess and disclose their biodiversity impacts, aligning with biodiversity-disclosure legislation.</p> <p>T14 - Integration of biodiversity into sector-specific policies and practices.</p>

Suggested action points that came out of the discussions

Table 6: Action Points

Theme	Action	Possible GBF Target alignment
Species accounting and disclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestion for companies that have completed species accounting as part of their biodiversity footprint disclosure to share their methods and results on the repository. This information will be made accessible to guide others in species accounting, starting from baseline measurements to meaningful disclosure. 	<p>T4 - Halting human-induced extinction and ensuring species recovery.</p> <p>T15 - Encourage businesses to assess, monitor, and disclose biodiversity impacts.</p> <p>T19 - Increase knowledge-sharing and financial support for biodiversity conservation.</p>
Guidance on supporting protected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop clear guidance for businesses on how to effectively support protected areas, including defining what “support” means, setting measurable goals, and providing metrics to track progress. This will help businesses understand their role and impact in conservation efforts. 	<p>T1 - Promotes spatial planning that respects biodiversity in land and sea areas.</p> <p>T2 - Restore 30% of all degraded ecosystems</p> <p>T3 - Conserves 30% of global land and sea areas by 2030 through protected areas and OECMs.</p> <p>T4 - Halting human-induced extinction and ensuring species recovery</p> <p>T15 - Encourages businesses to assess, monitor, and disclose their biodiversity impacts, including conservation efforts.</p>
Sector-specific guidance and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create sector-specific guidance that outlines practical actions businesses can take to contribute to biodiversity goals. Identify the most appropriate tools and methodologies for each sector (e.g., energy, mining, agriculture, finance). This guidance should be included in the online repository. 	<p>T10 - Sustainable use of biodiversity resources in key sectors (e.g., agriculture, forestry).</p> <p>T14 - Integration of biodiversity into sector-specific policies and practices.</p> <p>T15 - Business assessment, monitoring, and reporting on biodiversity impacts.</p> <p>T16 - Sustainable consumption and production across supply chains.</p> <p>T19 - Increase knowledge-sharing and financial support for biodiversity conservation.</p>

Suggested action points that came out of the discussions

Table 6: Action Points

Theme	Action	Possible GBF Target alignment
Mobilizing funds, data, and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift focus from immediate actions to mobilizing financial resources, data, information accessibility, and knowledge sharing. This includes exploring how to upskill the workforce through capacity building and training programmes. 	<p>T19 - Increase financial resources, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing to support biodiversity goals.</p> <p>T20 - Promote information, knowledge, and technology sharing, with an emphasis on capacity-building.</p>
Storytelling and knowledge sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage businesses to share stories and best practices around capacity building and innovation, focusing on practical examples of conservation efforts. 	<p>T19 - Increase knowledge-sharing and capacity-building to support biodiversity goals.</p> <p>T20 - Promote the exchange of information, knowledge, and technology, with a focus on practical applications.</p>
Capacity building and training programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestion to develop a comprehensive capacity-building roadmap that outlines training programmes and upskilling opportunities for employees, with a focus on conservation practices and knowledge sharing across sectors. Mapping exercise to identify training programmes relevant to the South African context, specifying global, compliance-related, and disclosure-related trainings. Capacity building related training - there is a need to take a closer look at case studies that have a local context. 	<p>T19 - Enhance capacity-building and knowledge-sharing to empower businesses to achieve biodiversity goals.</p> <p>T20 - Promote the exchange of information and training resources, with a focus on sector-specific and compliance-related biodiversity training.</p>

Suggested action points that came out of the discussions

Table 6: Action Points

Theme	Action	Possible GBF Target alignment
Online repository content enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the online repository to include South African biodiversity-disclosure-related legislation, along with educational resources that emphasize the basics of biodiversity. This content will help businesses understand why biodiversity is important and how it aligns with their operational goals. Include case studies in the repository that show how businesses can start their biodiversity journey, alongside hard data and success metrics for more advanced companies to refine their current actions and plans. 	<p>T15 - Encourage businesses to assess and disclose their biodiversity impacts, aligning with biodiversity-disclosure legislation.</p> <p>T19 - Promote capacity-building and knowledge-sharing by providing resources and case studies to help businesses improve their biodiversity practices.</p>
Case studies and data sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide case studies that cater to businesses at different stages of their biodiversity integration, from beginners to more advanced companies. These case studies should include examples of successful biodiversity initiatives, highlighting specific actions, challenges, and measurable outcomes. Share relevant hard data on biodiversity impacts and trends, giving businesses the data they need to align their actions with national and global biodiversity goals. 	<p>T15 - Encourage businesses to assess, disclose, and refine their biodiversity efforts through real-world examples and case studies.</p> <p>T19 - Promote knowledge-sharing and access to biodiversity data to help businesses align with national and global goals.</p>

Emerging GBF alignment trends

Theme

Suggested Action Point

Possible GBF target alignment

GBF Theme

Ecosystems

Species Accounting and Disclosure

Guidance on Supporting Protected Areas

Target 1: Spatial Planning

Target 3: Conservation

Target 2: Restoration

Target 4: Species

Reducing Threats

Sector-Specific Guidance and Tools

Mobilizing Funds, Data, and Knowledge

Storytelling and Knowledge Sharing

Capacity Building and Training Programmes

Online Repository Content Enhancement

Case Studies and Data Sharing

Target 10: Agriculture and Forestry

Target 14: Mainstreaming

Target 15: Business

Target 16: Consumption

Target 19: Finance

Target 20: Capacity Building

Sustainable Use

Capacity Building

Implementation and Mainstreaming

Conclusion

The Business Advisory Group meeting allowed for more dialogue around the critical challenges businesses are facing in aligning with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The questions we posed to the BAG members allowed for further in-depth dialogue around challenges, but also some suggestions of action points. It was clear that the questions posed to the businesses need to be tailored per sector, but also made clearer and more concise.

Despite the challenges, factors driving the movement include growing momentum of investor pressure and peer pressure from leading companies who are paving the sustainability pathway. There is strong indication that businesses are moving from acknowledgment to action and disclosure but that more work needs to be done on a sectoral scale, to achieve further alignment with global and national policy. It was stressed again that more governmental support, as well as communication is needed to fully align with the national and global targets.

Next Steps

The next steps for this project include the collation and synthesis of all the BAG findings to produce an in-depth BAG synthesis document, as well as the creation of a Business action Plan and Roadmap. This will be followed by a webinar in late November /Early December to wrap up the project. The roadmap will be inclusive of monitoring, evaluation, and future alignment opportunities with the NBSAP forum.

In closing, this project aims to provide relevant information from the different sectors, for government, to learn about the challenges business are facing, as well as how companies are already making progress towards biodiversity mainstreaming and alignment to Global and National policy. This project aims to encourage more business-government dialogue and assist in providing valuable insights for national target-setting and business stakeholder input into the process of updating South Africa's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The outcomes of the project will primarily depend on the willingness of business to partake in such dialogues and the commitment from government to help steer the needle towards achieving a future where biodiversity is considered an imperative component of sustainable business practice.

Appendix 1: Attendees list

The attendees represented various industries and are divided into the invited members of the BAGs who are representatives of individual businesses (Table 3); and observer members who are representatives of industry bodies, NGOs, academia etc. (Table 4).

Table 7: Business Representatives

No.	Name	Organization	Sector	In-person or online?
1.	Ashley Miller	Harmony	Mining	Online
2.	Dineo Mogashoa	Investec	Finance	Online
3.	Joanne Dube	Investec	Finance	Online
4.	Justine Bolton	FirstRand	Finance	Online
5.	Madeleine Bornman	Sibanye Stillwater	Mining	Online
6.	Martin Ginster	Sasol	Energy	In-person
7.	Mthombeni Ndlangisa	Glencore	Energy	Online
8.	Mudzanga Thangavhuelelo	Transnet	Transport	Online
9.	Nadine Cronk	Hatch	Mining	Online
10.	Nivashni Govender	Harmony	Mining	Online
11.	Nyiko Mutileni	ZZZ	Agriculture	Online
12.	Prince Mkhonto	Glencore	Mining	In-person
13.	Samantha Mooi	Investec	Finance	Online
14.	Terisha Silal	Sasol	Energy	In-person
15.	Tshego Tshoke	Shoprite	Consumer Staples	Online
16.	Warren Funston	Eskom	Energy	Online
17.	Warwick Mostert	Anglo American	Mining	In-person

Table 8: Observers and policy representatives

No.	Name	Organization	Sector	In-person or online?
18.	Candice Dott	TNFD	Consulting	Online
19.	Garth Barnes	NBI	Industry body	Online
20.	Jenifer Zungu	SANBI	Advisory	Online
21.	Leana Esterhuysen	UNISA	Academia	Online
22.	Mark Kaplan	Chapter zero	Board Education	In-person
23.	Mona Naicker	BUSA	Industry body	Online
24.	Ntakadzeni Tshidada	SANBI	Academia	Online
25.	Tsepang Makholela	DFFE	Government	Online
26.	Yaseen Lockhat	BASA	Advisory	Online

CONTACT DETAILS:

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