

# Proteus Annual Meeting 2022

## Summary Meeting Report



The Proteus Annual Meeting provides a space for Proteus Partners, observer businesses, and the conservation community to come together and discuss the latest thinking around business and biodiversity. A return to an in-person and hybrid meeting provided space for dynamic discussions and highlighted a number of action points/next steps including:

- Corporate approaches for achieving Biodiversity Net Gain must be mainstreamed. This process can be facilitated by the development and adoption of new monitoring methods and technologies e.g. eDNA and underpinned by clear principles and criteria for selecting measurement approaches. Proteus Partners are encouraged to feedback on the feasibility and applicability of the recommendations produced under the Align project.
- The increasing global momentum behind nature-positive should be supported by businesses and UNEP-WCMC via Proteus. Ensuring alignment between work in this area (e.g. Business for Nature and IUCN IMEC) and communicating relevant updates with Partners will be a key priority over 2022-2023.
- Partners will be kept informed of key developments within global policy, reporting and disclosure frameworks (e.g. TNFD), and target setting initiatives (e.g. SBTN) via Proteus webinars, training, and Technical Briefs. It was discussed how data and tools available through Proteus can support in these efforts.
- Proteus will continue to explore new data and resources that can support Partners e.g. looking at landscapes, supply chains, impact pathways, restoration and connectivity.
- Increasing the diversity of sectors and organisations in the Partnership by focusing expansion efforts on businesses from the renewables, infrastructure, and land use sectors.
- Providing opportunities to interact with and learn from peers within the Partnership.
- Seeking out opportunities to connect with other relevant initiatives (e.g. UNEP extractives, IBAT, IUCN renewables, SPACES) to build capacity for the benefit of partners.
- Improving the way partners can access data through the UNEP-WCMC resources portal.

## Introduction

The 2022 Proteus Annual Meeting was held in Cambridge, UK, as a hybrid event for the first time. The return to an in-person meeting enhanced the exchange of thoughts and ideas and offered an opportunity for focal points to reconnect and welcome new Partners.

Recognition of the risk from nature loss to society, the economy and to businesses has rapidly increased in recent years. There is a sense of urgency across business and society, creating new momentum for the nature agenda. The Proteus Annual Meeting continued to provide Partners and observer organisations with a space to share insights and advance discussions on how businesses can engage with nature-positive and progress their biodiversity approaches.

This summary report highlights the key messages and action points from the meeting. Recordings of presentations and other materials are available for Partners to revisit on the [Proteus Partnership website](#).

### Box 1: Proteus Annual Meeting in Numbers

- > 15 hours of content
- 34 speakers, including 7 Partner presentations, 11 external speakers, and 16 experts from UNEP-WCMC
- 54 in-person and 38 online participants
- All 16 Proteus Partner companies represented
- 8 observer organisations and companies present

## The global policy agenda

### The landscape is shifting

The second part of the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 15) is confirmed for Montréal, Canada from 7 to 19 December 2022. China, as COP 15 President, will continue to preside over the meetings. The event will be preceded by the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (OEWG-5) with the aim of further advancing negotiations on the draft framework in preparation for COP15.

The negotiations at COP15 will finalise the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, setting out an ambitious plan to transform society's relationship with nature and ensure that by 2050 the vision of living in harmony with nature is fulfilled.

### How can businesses engage?

The post-2020 framework envisages whole of society approaches and business support in the implementation of the ambitious targets alongside governments and civil society will be a key enabler of transformative change.

[Business for Nature](#) (BfN) are actively supporting businesses to engage in the global policy agenda while amplifying a credible and progressive business voice calling on governments to adopt more ambitious targets that spur business action towards a nature-positive future. BfN have recently launched a [campaign](#) encouraging sign-up to the COP15 business statement on mandatory assessment and disclosure.

Companies were also encouraged to start discussions with national governments and encourage them to voice more ambitious

demands during the formation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. A cross-industry push for these systemic changes will boost the confidence of policymakers when finalising the framework.

### The role UNEP-WCMC and Proteus

During the meeting, UNEP-WCMC shared updates and insights into the negotiations to date and on the [proposed headline indicators](#) for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. These aim to inform the process to develop the monitoring framework and to assist national governments in monitoring and reporting progress towards the post-2020 goals and targets.

Providing support for Partners to navigate and support implementation of global policy remains a core goal of Proteus. UNEP-WCMC will continue to share regular updates and materials that support businesses to navigate the negotiations

and understand the relevant emerging implications for business, in the form of written briefings, email updates, and webinars. The data made available to companies as part of Proteus will support them to assess and address their impacts and dependencies on nature, and to align with anticipated mandatory disclosures under draft Target 15

Meanwhile, future Proteus Annual Meetings will provide space to discuss and explore the implications of the final global biodiversity framework, and how business can support its implementation. Sharing of knowledge and experience across sectors will help to build the conservation and restoration capacity needed to secure nature-positive outcomes. Proteus Partners are encouraged to find opportunities to align their strategies and commitments with the post-2020 targets, and to share lessons learned through the Proteus Annual Meeting and other relevant forums.

## Corporate approaches to Biodiversity Net Gain and location-based biodiversity measurement

### Biodiversity net gain

In recognition of an increasing number of companies are making Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Net Positive Impact (NPI) commitments, this Proteus Horizon Scan session facilitated peer-to-peer knowledge exchange to advance and scale corporate approaches to BNG/NPI.

During the meeting, Proteus Partners presented on their biodiversity approaches and efforts to work towards BNG/NPI commitments, including through 1) establishing no-go commitments 2)

achieving a net positive impact on biodiversity across all their operations, 3) enhancing biodiversity around existing sites, 4) and implementing Additional Conservation Actions (ACAs) e.g. supporting biodiversity projects in countries where they have existing operations and investments.

Ensuring implementation of BNG/NPI carries various challenges. Partners shared that:

- collecting baseline data can be challenging, especially in the marine realm. Using a range of data collection

methods, including innovations such as eDNA can help address some gaps. Further, it can be challenging to define when the quality of the collected data becomes good enough to constitute a reliable baseline.

- evidencing and guaranteeing impactful and realistic avoidance measures is imperative but sometimes difficult to demonstrate.
- aggregation of data up to the corporate level is difficult when a portfolio of projects contains different ecosystems, as is often the case.

To assess progress of BNG/NPI commitments, accurate spatial data about the location of significant biodiversity features is essential. Using the data and tools made available through Proteus (such as IBAT and Ocean+) can support Partners in the implementation of their commitment, particularly when screening for potential avoidance or minimisation measures or looking for opportunities for restoration and ACAs. Proteus Partners can also make use of training and technical assistance to build capacity within their organisations around the use of spatial data and the considerations for BNG/NPI.

### Location-based biodiversity measurement

The landscape of different screening approaches, reporting initiatives and metrics frameworks can be challenging for businesses to navigate. The Align project aims to provide a more structured way of selecting relevant approaches using a set of principles and technical criteria for site-based measurement. These highlight good practice (what we should be doing) and best practice (what we should be aspiring to). Approaches

generally focus on screening for risks and opportunities, or on quantifying biodiversity impacts and biodiversity performance.

Partners discussed the tools and approaches they use which range from bespoke in-house models and approaches, screening tools such as IBAT, metrics such as STAR, and indicator frameworks such as the Global Biodiversity Score (GBS) or Biodiversity Indicators for Site-based Impacts (BISI). The BISI methodology, developed in consultation with Proteus and piloted with several Proteus Partners, was discussed as a useful way to select site-level indicators to assess corporate biodiversity performance. In 2022/23 efforts are underway to refine the methodology for BISI stage 3 (aggregation and reporting).

The Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosure (TNFD) is undoubtedly playing a significant role in influencing the shape of metrics frameworks. Whether the TNFD and other global standardised systems for biodiversity will be able to make companies more comparable while still reflecting the specificity of locations and operations in its measurements remains to be seen. Partners found that well-known metrics are commonly reported on (such as the proximity to and overlap of protected areas), while less understood metrics are treated with more caution. TNFD has an opportunity to address gaps by mainstreaming underrepresented and useful metrics.

Proteus will continue to support Partners through regular communications and updates on the Align Project, TNFD and BISI. Proteus is already supporting Partners through technical assistance projects in areas of biodiversity measurement and indicators (e.g. supporting engagement in BISI).

# Delivering on nature-positive

## Corporate readiness for nature-positive

The fundamental concept of nature-positive stems from the urgent need to halt and reverse the loss of nature; to conserve, regenerate and restore; and to set nature on a path to full recovery by 2050. Nature-positive requires a transformation in how we value and consider nature across all aspects of our economies and society. The role of business in contributing to nature-positive was explored in an expert panel.

The panel discussions highlighted:

- For any economic process or actor to be nature-positive, it must actively regenerate nature and increase biodiversity in its entirety.
- We need to recognise that becoming nature-positive may not be possible or is very challenging at the level of an individual company.
- Nature-positive can play a key role in recruiting and retaining talent.
- A shift in mindset from risk mitigation and impact management to companies actively contributing toward global goals is essential.
- Whole-of-business approaches that consider entire value chains and a broader landscape perspective are essential.
- Work is still needed in many companies to shift their perspective and align with the [high-level business actions](#) introduced by Business for Nature.

A number of businesses actively engage in conservation and restoration of nature, but examples of large businesses already operating in a nature-positive way are limited. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) analysed [trends in nature-related reporting](#) across 55 companies. They found that the recognition of nature-related risks has now reached the CEO level in many companies. However, more progress is needed to ensure businesses recognise nature-related topics as material; set ambitious targets and commitments; and effectively disclose risks and opportunities.

## Emerging disclosure recommendations

The TNFD is developing a risk management and disclosure framework for organisations to report and act on evolving nature-related risks. Businesses can engage in its development through participation in public consultation on the beta versions. To date beta [v0.1](#) has featured the fundamentals for understanding nature and the development of the LEAP process (Locate, Evaluate, Assess, and Prepare), and beta [v0.2](#) elaborates on LEAP for financial institutions, and explores metrics and targets.

TNFD recommendations for location-related disclosures, can be assisted by data made available through Proteus including the World Database on Protected Areas, IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas the Global Critical Habitat Screening layer, and the Hotspots of Natural Capital Depletion layer.

## Going beyond the operational site: supply chains

Focusing solely on the impacts of an operational site will not be enough to deliver on nature-positive targets. Companies are increasingly being asked about impacts and dependencies across supply chains and this has led to growing demand from businesses for industry-wide regulations and reporting standards of supply chain impacts.

Many companies are already looking at their supply chains through the lens of climate change. Discussions highlighted that biodiversity is not yet on the radar of procurement departments and that capacity building and engagement are needed to cover this gap. Besides expertise and capacity, concerns about barriers to data availability were also voiced.

In line with expansion ambitions, UNEP-WCMC will explore the role of Proteus in supporting companies to address supply chain impacts and dependencies on biodiversity. We will do this by looking at existing data available through Proteus and exploring how it can support biodiversity management across supply chains. At the same time, we will explore opportunities to develop new data offerings over the 2021-2025 phase that will focus on supporting decision-making on environmental issues within supply chains.

Supply chain issues for current Partners are also becoming more apparent with the increasing demand for metals and minerals to support the renewable energy transition. UNEP is working on guiding principles for an integrated, lifecycle-based approach to mining for the green transition. This will draw on the expertise of governments, intergovernmental organisations, and international businesses, and is expected to be released early next year. UNEP-WCMC will continue to collaborate with UNEP on their work

around sustainable mining supply chains and we will communicate updates and potential opportunities for involvement to our partners.

## Going beyond the operational site: landscapes

Expanding focus from site-based impacts into landscapes and addressing cumulative impacts can help businesses identify new opportunities, routes for implementing Additional Conservation Actions and support work towards nature-positive outcomes. The restoration, protection or conservation of biodiversity can help secure ecosystem services and address multiple challenges e.g. through application of nature-based solutions. To secure effective biodiversity outcomes through landscape approaches, collaboration across stakeholders and use of spatial decision-making frameworks to identify risks, opportunities and trade-offs is required.

The Development Corridors Partnership has been building capacity for development corridor decision-making to be based on sound scientific evidence and effective use of planning tools and procedures. An example from Kenya showed how looking at cumulative operational and infrastructural impacts holistically can highlight multiple drivers of impact on Key Biodiversity Areas, much more than initial monitoring schemes reported. It is essential to engage with local communities, plan for the long-term, and implement effective monitoring programmes with a landscape perspective.

Discussions highlighted a number of common challenges and opportunities associated with addressing cumulative impacts. Fostering cross-sectoral collaboration by expanding into new sectors within Proteus will provide a forum to discuss and explore the application of landscape-level approaches through peer-to-peer learning between partners and other stakeholders.

# Proteus Partnership going forward

## Proteus Implementation and Strategy

Proteus Partners reiterated their support for the expansion of Proteus to the renewables, infrastructure, and land-use sectors in line with the Proteus [expansion plan](#). Partners suggested potential approaches to strengthen UNEP-WCMC efforts to diversify the Partnership e.g. exploring impact pathways alongside a sectoral approach, emphasising the biodiversity data benefits and using existing Partners to facilitate introductions and recommendations.

Effective communication and future development of Proteus should be underpinned by an understanding of how Partners use data and resources, the value added to their organisations and the impact achieved. UNEP-WCMC welcomes input from Partners on how we can design an impact-tracking approach to receive direct feedback from Partners and collate stories of success.

Recognising the wider value of Proteus outputs to a broader audience, including industry associations, JV partners and SMEs, UNEP-WCMC are looking to implement a slightly revised approach to sharing Technical Briefs. Instead of the current 6-month embargo on each document, we will have two release points throughout the year. This will simplify the process of releasing Technical Briefs for UNEP-WCMC and Proteus Partners for wider sharing.

## Tools and Collaborations

To help Partners navigate the datasets and knowledge resources provided by UNEP-WCMC, a resource portal and dashboard will soon be made available to Proteus Partners. This will be

supported by a single sign-on from the Proteus website to provide streamlined access.

IBAT shared an overview of their new strategy which includes adding new features and data layers into IBAT and improving the security of the platform. IBAT is also collaborating with ESG providers, such as RepRisk, FairSupply, and RSMetrics to provide spatial analytics insights that support investor due diligence processes. User feedback is key to future development of IBAT and Proteus Partners are encouraged to share recommendations and suggestions on how IBAT can be improved further.

IUCN and The Biodiversity Consultancy provided an overview of their upcoming work with the renewables sector, which complements Proteus data, resources, and future ambitions. UNEP-WCMC are identifying synergies and alignment with these efforts over the coming months to ensure comprehensive support for renewable companies to manage biodiversity.

Systemiq and UNEP-WCMC shared updates on the work being done under SPACES and how this is relevant to Proteus Partners. SPACES is a coalition engaging a wide range of actors for achieving climate and nature goals via the use of spatial data. Spatial intelligence is being gathered through methods such as remote sensing, which is then analysed at a landscape level and is used to mobilise decision-makers and improve national planning and strategy. SPACES are calling for case studies on the application of spatial data to map out supply chain impacts and welcome interest from businesses in partnering for the development of sustainable models for mainstreaming data collection and access.

## Proteus Annual Meeting 2023

We would like to thank all Partners, speakers, and observer organisations who participated in the 2022 Proteus Annual Meeting. The engagement and contributions, both online and in-person, fuelled three days of informative discussion and provided a valuable opportunity to listen to Partner feedback. As we look toward the 2023 Proteus Annual Meeting, we invite all Partners to contact

us and provide their feedback, including what you enjoyed about the 2022 meeting, what you would improve, and what topics or themes you would like to see covered next year. Feedback can be sent directly to [stacey.baggaley@unep-wcmc.org](mailto:stacey.baggaley@unep-wcmc.org) and can also be submitted via Menti: <https://www.menti.com/nbxq27t35a>.