

Meeting Report

Proteus Strategy Review

Introduction

Proteus Partners met remotely on Wednesday 10th and Thursday 11th June 2020 to input into the current version of the Proteus Strategy 2021-2025 and discuss the future of the Partnership. This report summarises the outcomes of the meeting. We welcome feedback from Partners on any additions or omissions.

Objectives

- To review the current version of the Strategy underpinning the next phase of Proteus in detail, outlining strategic priorities and the future direction of the Partnership.
- To secure Partner buy-in on the next phase Strategy.

Overview

Day 1 – 14:00 to 15:30 BST Wednesday 10th June

- Proteus 2016-2020: The successes
- Proteus Strategy overview: Part I

Day 2 – 14:00 to 15:30 BST Thursday 11th June

- Proteus website redesign
- Proteus Strategy overview: Part II

Supporting Materials

- Proteus Strategy Review Meeting Agenda [[download](#)]
- Slide Pack for Day 1 and Day 2 [[download](#)]
- Proteus Annual Report 2019 [[download](#)]
- Proteus Impact Review 2019 [[download](#)]
- Draft Proteus Strategy 2021-2025 [Emailed 4th June 2020]

Take away messages

- **The Successes of Proteus:** The current phase of Proteus has successfully made progress against its objectives, including improving the quality and quantity of biodiversity data available for decision making. The Strategy for the next phase draws on these successes, and continues engagement with international agreements on biodiversity.
- **New Proteus Website:** The new Proteus website was well received and Partners are looking forward to using it. Virtual training on the new Proteus website in Norwegian and Portuguese would be useful.
- **Proteus Strategy 2021 – 2025:** Partners were broadly supportive of the draft Proteus Strategy 2021-2025, and made helpful suggestions for clarifying and finalising the vision, mission and goals (see summary below). Having an agreed understanding of key terms (e.g. nature positive) in the Strategy will be important to help Partners communicate the aims and value of Proteus to internal and external audiences.
- **Next Steps:** Following bilateral discussions with Partners, the Strategy will be updated, recirculated and presented for approval at the Proteus Annual Meeting in September.

Vision

A planet where business contributes to a clean, safe, healthy environment for all

Partners were **broadly supportive** of the vision and felt it was understandable. One challenge raised was **how to communicate the vision** to an external audience to demonstrate Partners' commitment to it. Feedback included:

- **Maintain focus on biodiversity:** The vision doesn't specifically refer to biodiversity. This could be seen as a dilution of the Partnership's key focus or a change of scope in the next phase. It was understood that the vision recognizes the need for action by many stakeholders across different challenges (e.g. climate change) to achieve the overall aims of the Partnership (see '**going beyond biodiversity**' below), but keeping the core focus of the Partnership (if not the mission statement) on biodiversity was seen as important.
- **Relevance to new Partners:** The vision needs to be fit for purpose as Proteus expands to other sectors (Goal 4) i.e. would the vision resonate with an agricultural commodities company?
- **Define terms:** There should be a common understanding of the terms in the vision (e.g. 'safe').

Mission

Support company decision making to be nature positive

Recognising the imperative for sustainable development pathways, Proteus aims to achieve its mission through improved internationally accepted information and data which can help companies, governments and civil society tackle the dual challenges of biodiversity decline and climate change.

Partners were **broadly supportive** of, and aligned with, the mission. There was **agreement on the changes** since the previous iteration and support for the **inclusion of data** within the mission, as data remains an important part of Proteus for Partners. Feedback included:

- **Going beyond biodiversity:** It was considered important that the mission statement is not just about biodiversity, and that it recognizes the need to link biodiversity and other environmental challenges (i.e. the **biodiversity-climate-water nexus**). This linkage is important both for **mainstreaming biodiversity** and to help **communicate and support the value of Proteus** internally (i.e. it supports a broader scope of work and business continuity).
- **Relevance to new Partners:** With the proposed expansion of Proteus to other sectors (Goal 4), the relevance of the mission to these sectors (and/or the need for it to be relevant at this stage) should be considered.
- **Other stakeholders:** The scientific and conservation communities are also seen as key stakeholders to help tackle the challenges highlighted by the mission (see proposed additions below).
- **Defining 'nature positive':** Use of the term 'nature positive' can create communication challenges internally and externally (e.g. with lenders). Given its relevance and prominence in the wider (e.g. policy) context, 'nature positive' should be retained, but with a clear understanding of what is meant by this term in the context of Proteus.
- **Recognising different pathways:** Alternative wording was suggested (see below), to reflect the aspirational nature of Proteus and recognize that the Partnership is supporting companies that are on the pathway to being nature positive, as well as those that have specific commitments on net positive impact.

Support company decision making **towards being** nature positive

*Recognising the imperative for sustainable development pathways, Proteus aims to achieve its mission through improved internationally accepted information and data which can help companies, governments, **scientists, conservation organizations** and civil society tackle the dual challenges of biodiversity decline and climate change.*

Goal 1

To help companies understand and communicate the business case for nature conservation

Proteus will build and advocate the business case for company engagement, integration and involvement in nature conservation. Proteus will engage at multiple levels including with C-suite, Board and operations level partners.

Partners were supportive of this goal and **recognized the value of materials** to help guide conversations on the business case for nature conservation, both to colleagues and external stakeholders. Feedback included:

- **Terminology:** Participants agreed that moving away from technical language towards more commonly used terminology (e.g. 'nature' instead of 'biodiversity') helps with internal and external reporting and engagement. Proteus can help companies to build a common understanding of this terminology.
- **Sharing knowledge:** It was stressed that a knowledge network is extremely helpful for sharing case studies, relevant scientific papers and other resources.
- **Support and resources:** Participants highlighted the importance of Proteus for delivering the resources and support to make the internal and external business case for corporate biodiversity management generally, and nature-based solutions specifically.
- **Operational level engagement:** Partners mentioned that Proteus engagement at the operational level will provide important opportunities to articulate corporate biodiversity risks and translate impact to site-level.

Goal 2

To accelerate and scale decision support tools and capacity building to help improve corporate performance

Proteus will support the leadership position of Proteus Partners among their peers, including through better corporate biodiversity screening systems and an improved understanding of how to manage biodiversity risks. Proteus will support and provide biodiversity data (including on the biodiversity-climate nexus), as well as the tools to access, interpret and visualise data that meet business needs and suit company processes. Proteus will further augment this shift in corporate biodiversity systems through data analytics, providing contextualised data, interpretation, and application approaches to aid in impact assessment and mitigation.

Partners were very supportive of this goal and **underlined the importance of the data** provided through the Partnership. Feedback included:

- **Complex data landscape:** There was recognition among Partners that the biodiversity data landscape is becoming increasingly complex. Keeping up with the number of new datasets (e.g. on biodiversity, climate, etc.) poses a challenge to companies. Proteus can help raise awareness among Partners about new datasets and provide guidance on how to use them.
- **Improving the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT):** Participants would welcome improvements to, and the continued expansion of, IBAT through integrating additional datasets into the tool (e.g. climate change related datasets).
- **Biodiversity-climate nexus:** There was strong support for working at the biodiversity-climate nexus (including water) and Partners highlighted the need for tools and datasets to help strengthen this narrative.

Goal 3

To normalise and increase business exposure to the global policy agenda on nature

Proteus will further develop a platform for business to engage with and support the international biodiversity policy landscape, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), other relevant multilateral environmental bodies and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Combined with the provision of horizon scanning for future environmental risks and opportunities, Proteus will act at the nexus of Science and Policy/Business and Conservation.

Partners broadly agreed with this goal, and **recognized the value of updates on and/or involvement** with the global policy agenda. Feedback included:

- **Engagement is key:** The interaction with the global policy agenda should move beyond 'exposure' to 'engagement' (the term previously used in Proteus - see potential wording below). The term 'normalise' could be taken to mean 'standardise', when in fact the goal seems to be about broadening the types and scale of interaction.
- **Clarifying actions and outcomes:** Clarification may be needed on what the environmental multilateral bodies referred to in Goal 2 are, and what type of connections Proteus aims to make between Partners and the policy agenda. It would be useful to clarify what the outcomes of this goal would be (e.g. keeping Partners informed, supporting Partners to engage with policy processes, Proteus showcasing Partner activities to policymakers).
- **Creating space for business:** Proteus should continue to play a role in helping to create 'safe spaces' for businesses to engage with the agenda (e.g. at meetings or through dialogue with non-governmental organisations) and contribute to achieving global goals. Proteus can help to create an enabling environment through giving Partners an industry-unified voice at important international meetings (e.g. COP).
- **Synthesising complex processes:** Providing updates and insights into policy processes are useful, particularly on opportunities to engage e.g. delegations to meetings, written comments on draft policy documents and engaging through industry bodies.
- **Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** The inclusion of the SDGs is very useful for Partners as this links Proteus to other environmental considerations that are important to Partners (e.g. zero waste, carbon).

To **normalise and** increase / **facilitate** business **engagement with** the global policy agenda on nature

Proteus will further develop a platform for business to engage with and support the international biodiversity policy landscape, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), other relevant multilateral environmental bodies and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Combined with the provision of horizon scanning for future environmental risks and opportunities, Proteus will act at the nexus of Science and Policy/Business and Conservation.

Goal 4

To sustain a viable mutually beneficial Partnership through cross-sectoral collaboration

Proteus will expand to new sectors to encourage learning between sectors on tools and approaches. Proteus will nurture collaboration at corporate level across landscapes and through supply chains, and support alignment with the CBD and SDG's agendas for action. Proteus will continue to be a pioneer initiative in data, analytics and monitoring within the global business-nature space and as an architect in the business case for nature.

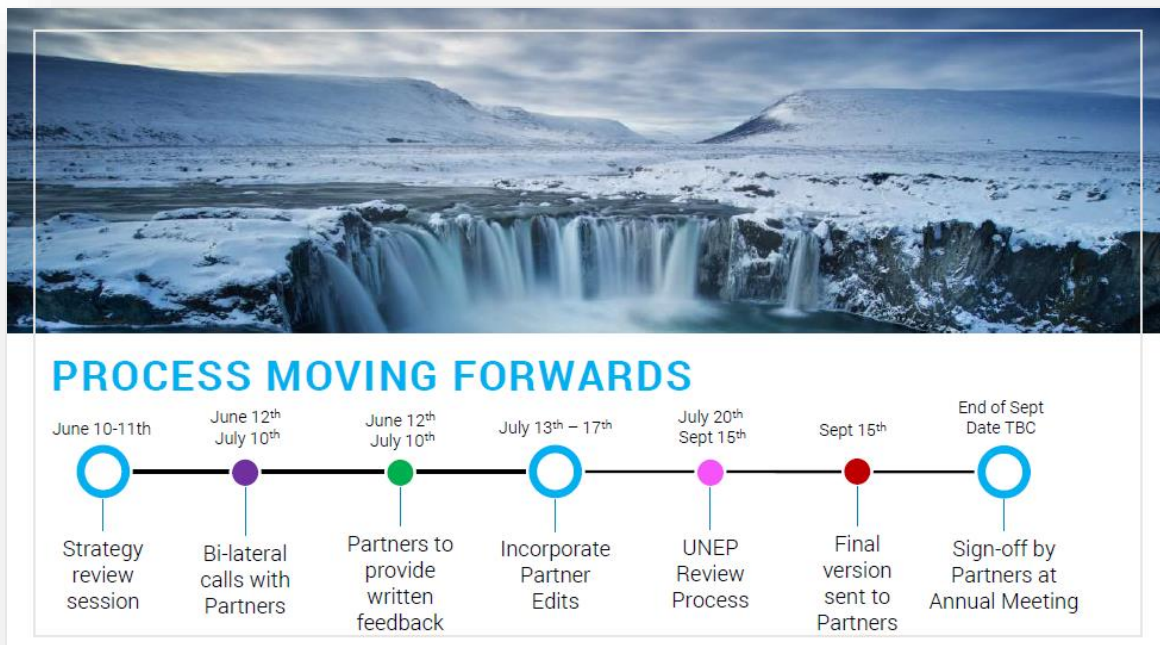
Partners were mostly **supportive of expanding the Partnership** (particularly to **site-based sectors** with similar or complementary experiences of biodiversity management challenges) and provided useful suggestions for sectors to consider. It was noted that Partners would need to be able to **justify contributing the same amount to the Partnership** as new companies join (e.g. increased training hours). Feedback included:

- **Continuing to lead:** As it expands, Proteus should continue to drive forward good practice on biodiversity management, not just bring other companies up to the same level. This is important to avoid diluting the impact of the Partnership, while supporting companies to anticipate and respond to changing societal expectations and standards for biodiversity management.
- **Wider collaboration and networks:** Cross-sectoral collaboration should not just be seen as between UNEP-WCMC and companies, but also between other actors at the landscape / regional level. Proteus provides access to a much

wider network (e.g. UNEP regional offices) than just those in the Partnership, and this could be recognised under Goal 4.

- **Common goals and needs:** To ensure that the Partnership remains focused and relevant, new companies should not only share the goals of Proteus, but also have similar business needs. General criteria for membership could be considered e.g. site-based operations that require similar data and tools to mainstream biodiversity into decision making. Potential sectors to consider including in a future Partnership are: renewables, agriculture, infrastructure, forestry, tourism, fisheries and aquaculture. Brining supply chain companies into Proteus was seen both as an interesting prospect and challenging, given the potential requirement for different tools or data.
- **Highlighting opportunities:** Proteus not only helps companies manage their impacts, but also identify opportunities for positive actions for nature such as restoration activities. This could be recognised under Goal 4.
- **Strategic expansion:** Expanding Proteus should be done strategically (step-by-step), keeping in mind both the initial aims of Proteus and the size of the Partnership. Partners need to retain a sense of their own voice within the industry / sector, and Proteus needs to remain relevant as other sectors are brought in to the Partnership.

Next Steps



Feedback

We would appreciate your feedback on the Proteus Strategy Review Meeting. Please complete the short questionnaire available [here](#).

Save the Date

The Proteus Annual Meeting 2020 will be held remotely in the week of **21st September 2020**. More details will follow in due course.

Contact and Questions

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Jonty.Knox@unep-wcmc.org.