

ASI Nature Working Group – Call 2– Meeting Notes

2 June 2025

Agenda points:

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Defining critical habitats and setting a biodiversity baseline (plenary)
3. Biodiversity Management Plan/Action Plan, and No Net Loss/Net Gain
4. Breakout groups: leading practices (high impact Entities), Biodiversity requirements (all other Entities), Ecosystem Services (high impact Entities)
5. Close and next steps

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Discussion Notes:

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Defining critical habitats and setting a biodiversity baseline

The working group discussed the proposed changes on definition of critical habitat and biodiversity baselines, which incorporated comments received on the draft ahead of the call. The following points were raised in the discussion:

- The high impact criterion needs to be applied to Entities operating *in, or nearby* critical habitats. This was noted by ASI and it will be explored whether the concept of ‘Area of Influence’ would address this.
- There are advantages to standardizing baselines especially around No Net Loss (NNL)/Net Gain (NG) – need to have something to measure targets from.
- Baseline should be set earlier than 2020, from the point when the organisation first begins to invest in the site/operations. However earlier data may be less available, or of worse quality. If data is not available, there may be alternatives or official/third party data that can be used.
- In some European countries, regulation will require an initial assessment of biodiversity and soil protection; when sites close, companies need to restore to this original baseline. ASI should consider aligning with these regulatory requirements where possible. Opening up wording may help.
- There should be a distinction between Greenfield projects, where the baseline needs to be in place before impacts occur, and brownfield projects.
- Within standard systems, baselines can be used for lots of things; e.g. land conversion requirements, measuring impacts for claims, etc.

ASI team proposed to re-work criteria to distinguish between:

- *baseline for biodiversity in general* (e.g. part of the impact assessment/ management plan)- with the aim to keep this flexible. Guidance can note that this baseline should be set before impacts occur, and for historical operations should consider the trade-offs between earlier baselines and data quality/ availability, and:
- baseline for measuring NNL/ NG – 2020 to align with ICMM and GBF.

3. Biodiversity Management Plan/Action Plan, and No Net Loss/Net Gain

- The difference between No Net Loss/Net Gain is up to a lot of debate in scientific circles, and it is not possible to net positive and negative impacts as they are qualitatively different.

ASI team will proceed with the proposed adjustments to the draft, pending any further input:

- Maintain definition of Biodiversity Management Plan, but with specific reference to the sub-requirements set out in the draft criteria, and specify in Guidance that an action plan as per IFC definition is likely to meet most of these.
- Keep proposed requirements as: either No Net Loss or Net Gain (not making a distinction between these two).

4. Break-out group share-backs

The Working group divided into breakouts to discuss three topics in parallel: Leading practices around biodiversity, biodiversity requirements for all other Entities (non high-impact), and Ecosystem Services:

1. Leading practices (high impact Entities)
 - Need to determine what type of data will be sufficient to demonstrate pre-disturbance biodiversity levels. Scientific articles, assessment surveys, etc.
 - Alignment with existing tools and initiatives: i.e. consider IUCN red list and changes to species over time.
 - Inclusion of landscape-level collaboration (beyond direct sites)- can be applied to both industrial and upstream (e.g. mining) sites.
 - For those on compact sites: productivity measure (how much production for your land footprint and showing improvement over time).
2. Biodiversity requirements (all other Entities)
 - Need to consider impacts from the supply chain/sourcing (i.e. as a minimum requirement mapping the supply chain to understand potential impacts on Biodiversity) – this somehow needs to be captured.
 - Own-site action is the ‘easy part’, relatively straight-forward, the step-change comes when a company maps its suppliers in its wider ‘Area of Influence’, identified where its materials originate, and spots shared risks and vulnerabilities. Meaningful gains then come from joint projects on those shared/prioritised challenges with external stakeholders.
 - On criterion 2.2 (if an Entity has not identified any material impacts): There were mixed opinions on whether this should be mandatory. This criterion would also need more guidance, actionable steps and practical ‘how to support’ to help companies understand what this could look like, i.e. case studies in the Guidance, cross-sectoral learnings. There should be a menu of example actions + flexibility for the Entity.
3. Ecosystem Services (high impact Entities)
 - The concept of ‘Area of Influence’/where its boundaries lie needs to be defined more clearly.
 - Cross-checking Key Biodiversity Areas/STAR metric to prioritise where focus should be on biodiversity and ES.
 - It was noted that KBAs are defined under a different governance than IUCN.
 - It would be good to have a complete list of methods in the Guidance, would ensure consistency across Entities and therefore consistency of auditing. Need to follow a limited set of methods.
 - On Traditional Owners: to date when engaging in Ecosystem Services, there is some reluctance to share information on what and where – the values of the area are in part due to their being non-disclosed.
 - Consider changing the word ‘protection of Ecosystem Services’, as the ecosystem services identified in 1.8 may not be the ones you need to track over time. Wording could be amended to reflect understanding and evolving value to the communities and to the company.

- Pre-disturbance rehabilitation is not always what is 'best', depending on what the Traditional Owners would like to see (could be alternative form of land uses).

5. Next steps and close

- The notes, recording, and updated draft following discussions will be shared with the Working Group.
- Next call will focus on Water Stewardship and Pollution as well as revisiting any open questions on the Biodiversity/ Ecosystem services criteria.