

# Harmonizing Business engagement across the Rio Conventions

Submission to the [CBD Notification 2025-005](#)

Co-authored by [World Benchmarking Alliance \(WBA\)](#), [We Mean Business Coalition \(WMB\)](#) and [Business for Nature \(BfN\)](#)

## Introduction

The private sector plays a critical role in achieving the objectives of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Companies and financial institutions shape land use, emissions and supply chains and their alignment with the Rio Conventions is essential to delivering societal global goals on nature, climate and land degradation.

Despite increased business action<sup>1</sup>, the fragmentation across the three Conventions presents significant challenges to the private sector. The overall complexity and inconsistency in legislative and regulatory environments makes it difficult for businesses to plan ahead and operate with confidence. Companies also face a complex web of initiatives, reporting frameworks and expectations that often lack coordination or consistency. **Business leaders consistently stress the need for clearer, more coherent enabling conditions and regulations that can effectively and efficiently support the flow of private capital into mitigation and adaptation practices as well as those that protect and restore nature and land.** Enhanced coherence across the Conventions, such as aligning CBD's Target 15 on biodiversity disclosures with the UNFCCC's NCQG and GST1 emphasis on financial institutions managing climate-related risks, would provide clearer, interoperable regulatory frameworks, enabling businesses to invest effectively and confidently toward long-term goals.

At the national level, a more integrated and coherent approach to implementing these three Conventions helps governments design more efficient and streamlined policies, while also making it easier and more resource-efficient for businesses to engage, understand expectations, and

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<sup>1</sup> Some examples on climate include: over 10.000 companies committed to climate targets via [SBTi](#) (with 7.600 validated targets); private finance for nature rising elevenfold in four years to surpass [\\$102 billion](#); pioneering nature-related targets from [SBTN](#) adopted by major corporations such as Kering, GSK and Holcim; and over 600 businesses now actively pursuing actions aligned with the "[Nature Positive for Climate Action](#)" initiative, doubling the commitment since COP28. Some examples on nature include: [500+ organizations have committed to disclose](#) their nature-related issues to investors using the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosure (TNFD) recommendations; [150 companies](#) are preparing to set robust science-based targets for nature through the Science Based Targets Network (SBTN); 30+ companies have had their nature strategies published as part of [It's Now for Nature](#), a global campaign that aims to bring together all businesses to act on nature and contribute towards a nature-positive world by 2030; 100+ companies have committed to investing in trees by conserving, restoring, and growing 12 billion trees in over 100 countries through [1t.org](#).

align their strategies and transition plans accordingly. Coherent policy across government, with clear and predictable pathways for business engagement and accountability, is key to unlocking scaled private sector contribution.

### **The challenge: fragmentation undermines progress**

More and more businesses have been increasingly stepping up, committing to net-zero pathways, developing nature-positive strategies and transition plans, and adopting sustainable land management practices. However, the divergence in how each convention defines business responsibilities, structures engagement mechanisms, and assesses corporate progress has created several inefficiencies and barriers to action:

- Duplicative reporting requirements can lead to confusion among companies that want to show leadership, while allowing others to cherry-pick what to act on and what to ignore.
- Lack of coherence between mandates weakens corporate accountability and risks disincentivizing progressive companies that are already leading the way.
- Disjointed policy signals and overlapping responsibilities across government entities undermines long-term planning and investments, limiting the ability of businesses to act decisively and at scale.

### **The opportunity: a harmonized framework for business engagement**

We propose that the Rio Conventions adopt a joint approach to policy making, aligning actions, priorities, and responsibilities across different strategies and departments to achieve climate, nature, and land use goals. Breaking the silos is vital to ensure the policy coherence needed to support meaningful environmental action from the private sector. This will make it easier to meaningfully engage businesses and set clear requirements for them to foster coherence and enable accelerated, integrated action.

This approach should begin by aligning key strategic frameworks, such as NDCs, NBSAPs, and LDN targets, so that businesses can pursue initiatives that simultaneously and synergistically support the objectives of all three Conventions. A coherent legislative framework makes business action easier and more cost-effective. Each of these frameworks should include business action plans to clarify the role of business and financial actors and create an enabling environment.

The approach should also aim to ensure consistency and interoperability of disclosure regimes across jurisdictions in a "building block" style that includes global baseline frameworks including by the ISSB, the TNFD and GRI; as well as global standards including the SBTi and the SBTN. Together, these resources can help parties and companies better address risks, opportunities, dependencies, and impacts in line with the latest science and continuous ambition.

Furthermore, parties should work towards clarifying business responsibilities in the negotiated decisions of each convention in a coherent manner, enabling governments and the convention secretariats to provide clearer guidance, track progress more effectively, and support the scaling of credible corporate action.

Finally, this harmonized approach must be supported by coordinated multi-stakeholder engagement platforms that facilitate delivery, unlock finance, and promote mutual learning towards greater ambition across the climate, nature, and land agendas.

### **Building on existing foundations**

We call for a harmonization process that builds on ongoing efforts across the three Conventions and aligns closely with broader global commitments, such as the [Pact for the Future Action 55\(c\)](#), which specifically encourages the private sector's contribution to addressing global challenges and strengthening their accountability towards the implementation of United Nations frameworks.

- **UNCBD** has made substantial progress, for example, through Target 15 and Decision 15/5, offering specific guidance, indicators and tools for business disclosure.
- **UNFCCC** has enabled business participation through the Marrakech Partnership, Race to Zero/Resilience and the High-Level Climate Champions.
- **UNCCD** has recently advanced with initiatives like Business for Land and the Riyadh Action Agenda, offering entry points for business engagement.

Each of these mechanisms provides a starting point, but without alignment, there is a potential risk of duplication efforts and inefficiencies that will deter focus on implementation and the full potential of business action will not be realized.

### **Recommendations**

1. Echoing the [NGO joint views on options for enhancing policy coherence across the Rio Conventions](#), **we support the creation of a joint work program (JWP)** across the Rio

Conventions, to work in a consistent and mutually supportive manner to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, as well as the KMGBF and land degradation neutrality targets.

This JWP should **have a dedicated working group (WG) on private sector engagement and action** that will work to support more harmonized frameworks for businesses engaging with the conventions.

2. We call on **Parties to align national implementation plans** (NDCs, LT-LEDS, NBSAPs and LDN targets, among others) **and clarify expectations for business contributions across all three agendas, ensuring consistent language on corporate accountability in future COP decisions across the Conventions.** To unlock the scale of private sector investment required to close the land, nature, and climate finance gaps, governments should ensure that these plans are ambitious, economy-wide and investable. It is crucial to involve the private sector from the outset, not only in implementation but also in the design of these plans, to build ownership, increase credibility and ensure alignment with real-world business decision making.
3. We call on the Rio Convention secretariats to **adopt an integrated monitoring approach, rooted in existing global standards and designed for comparability across conventions.** This would enable clearer assessment and recognition of business contributions; facilitate better tracking of progress, including mobilization / transition of finance flows; and help scale effective corporate practices across climate, biodiversity and land degradation agendas.

Harmonizing business engagement across the Rio Conventions offers a unique opportunity to unlock more effective, efficient, transparent, and ambitious private sector action. But this harmonization must be a race to the top, not a compromise that dilutes progress. By promoting mutual learning, aligning with the strongest existing frameworks, and converging around the highest standards of corporate accountability, Parties can build a more coherent global policy landscape. This will support businesses in delivering on their sustainability commitments, and ensure their contributions meaningfully advance the goals of the climate, biodiversity, and land degradation agendas.