



Global Compact Network UK

Climate Action Q&A Surgery: Business-related outcomes of COP15 – Key Takeaways

On 23 February, the UN Global Compact Network UK hosted a Climate Action Q&A Surgery on the '*Business-related outcomes of COP15*', featuring guest speakers: **Charmian Love**, Global Director of Advocacy at [Natura &Co](#), and **Kiran Sehra**, Biodiversity Analyst at [Aviva Investors](#) – both of whom were on the ground at COP15.

The key takeaways from the event are summarised below.

Outcomes of COP15:

In December 2022, parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity gathered in Montreal, Canada to agree on a new set of global targets aimed at halting and reversing biodiversity loss. Following nearly two weeks of negotiations, the post-2020 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was agreed upon and adopted by 188 governments, including the UK. The framework consists of four overarching goals and 23 targets to be met by 2030.

Headline targets include:

- **Target 3** – Achieve the effective conservation and management of at least 30% of the world's land, coastal areas, and oceans by 2030. As it stands, only 17% of land and 8% of marine areas are under protection, [according to the United Nations Environment Program \(UNEP\)](#).
- **Target 15** – Require large transnational companies and financial institutions to monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies, and impacts on biodiversity across their operations, portfolios, and value chains.
- **Target 18** – Phase out or reform subsidies that harm biodiversity by at least \$500bn per year, whilst increasing positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- **Target 19** – Mobilise at least \$200bn per year from public and private sources for biodiversity-related funding.
- **Target 22** – Ensure equitable representation and participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in biodiversity-related decision-making.

In the lead up to COP16, which will be held in Türkiye in 2024, signatories to the framework must now demonstrate their progress against the targets and update their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) accordingly.

Panellist Reflections:

- The GBF is ambitious in many respects. It commits governments and other key stakeholders to do more than just mitigate and reduce their negative impacts on nature, calling on them to implement nature-positive actions aimed at restoring and regenerating natural ecosystems. Targets 2 and 11, for instance, both make explicit reference to the goal of *enhancing* biodiversity and its ecosystem functions.
- Though not explicitly used within the GBF, the term ‘nature-positive’ featured heavily throughout the negotiations. A ‘Nature Positive’ pavilion was set up with notable representation from youth/indigenous communities, helping foster a more holistic understanding of how we can restore biodiversity in a way that promotes harmony between nature and people.
- Many have described COP15 as the ‘Paris-style’ agreement for nature. In some respects, the target to effectively conserve 30% of the world’s land and oceans by 2030 can be likened to the Paris goal of limiting global temperature increases to 1.5°C. The long-term success of the GBF will also be highly contingent upon the implementation of the targets across national jurisdictions, much like the Paris Agreement.
- Private sector actors have a key role to play in advancing the GBF targets and stand to benefit from doing so. Not only is biodiversity loss ranked as one of the top three risks in the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) most recent [Global Risk Report](#), but the depletion of natural ecosystems also poses direct physical, regulatory, and reputational risks for businesses, [as noted by Business for Nature](#).
 - Measuring, assessing, and disclosing nature-related impacts and dependencies in line with Target 15 will therefore be key to helping companies understand their exposure to risks and future-proof their business.
- There is a real opportunity for businesses to use the momentum from COP15 to raise biodiversity to the top of the agenda and galvanise action internally. The [‘High-level Business Actions on Nature’](#) framework outlines practical steps that companies can take to address their nature-related impacts. These include:
 - Conducting materiality assessments to identify, measure, and prioritise material impacts on nature. This can be done using guidance from the [Science-based Targets Network \(SBTN\)](#) and the [Natural Capital Protocol](#).
 - Committing to [science-based targets for nature](#).
 - Transforming business models and practices and aligning these with a nature-positive ambition (i.e., by collaborating with value chain stakeholders to implement nature-based solutions and restore natural ecosystems).
 - Advocating for ambitious government policies that will scale and speed up more positive business action (i.e., by encouraging the UK Government to update its NBSAPs in line with commitments made at COP15).
 - Transparently disclosing on all the above (i.e., using the [Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures \(TNFD\) framework](#)).
- Whilst the word ‘mandatory’ was bracketed from the final GBF text on Target 15, the [‘Make it Mandatory’](#) campaign launched in the lead-up to COP15 demonstrates that there is already a strong appetite for nature-related disclosures across the private sector.

- Companies should now build on the momentum of COP15 and avoid waiting for the final version of the TNFD to be released before disclosing on their nature-related risks, impacts, and dependencies.
 - Much like the [Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosures \(TCFD\)](#), the TNFD framework is being piloted and developed on an iterative basis. Early uptake by and feedback from larger companies and financial institutions will be key to ensuring that the framework is improved and provides a gold standard for nature-related reporting.
- SMEs should also begin identifying and disclosing their nature-related impacts and dependencies – even if resource constraints mean that this cannot be done to a gold standard. SMEs that are within larger companies’ value chains will likely face increased pressure from stakeholders to identify and report on their nature-related impacts and dependencies as a result of Target 15.
 - For example, Aviva Investors is now asking its portfolio companies to disclose against TNFD on how they are aligning their internal policies and practices with a nature-positive ambition, and to quantify the financial risks and opportunities associated with their dependencies and impacts on nature.
- Though the topic of voluntary biodiversity credits did feature in conversations at COP15, the extent to which they can deliver net positive biodiversity gains in their current form remains contentious.
 - Stronger governance mechanisms, standardised impact-related KPIs, and clearer definitions of what constitutes a ‘biodiversity credit’ must be established before they can be deployed more widely across the market.
 - Any company using biodiversity credits should ensure that they are deployed near the company’s source location and have KPIs that measure uplift in biodiversity.

Additional Resources:

- UN Global Compact Academy Course – [Biodiversity Fundamentals: The Business Case for Action](#)
- UN Global Compact Network USA – [Summary of COP15](#)
- International Chambers of Commerce – [Business Guide to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity](#)
- Natura &Co – [COP15 Spotify Playlist](#)
- Aviva Investors – [Biodiversity Policy](#)
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) – [Roadmap to Nature Positive](#)