

ambition for biodiversity

BIODEV
2030



BIODEV2030: common landmarks for high-quality voluntary commitments

Intended to BIODEV2030 partners

Context:

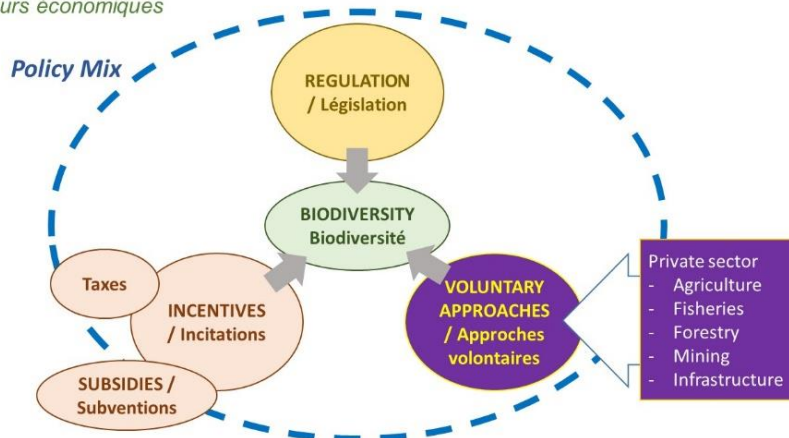
A “policy mix” traditionally comprises (i) legislative/regulatory measures, (ii) incentive measures, and also (iii) voluntary measures initiated by economic stakeholders (see figure below).

As preparation for negotiating a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework with ambitious goals, BIODEV2030 plans to reinforce the national “policy mix” biodiversity preservation by encouraging the emergence of “voluntary commitments” from economic sectors.

BIODEV2030 : Objective #1

Strengthening existing national policies by voluntary measures from economic actors

Renforcer les politiques nationales existantes par des mesures volontaires des acteurs économiques



The logical framework of the project states that every pilot country of the project, provides for “*voluntary commitments must be developed at a national or local level by key stakeholders in the targeted economic sectors.*” These voluntary commitments should “*integrate targets and MRV tools in their trajectories*¹.”

Purpose of this document

The term “voluntary commitment” (VC) which is at the heart of BIODEV2030 project, may be interpreted in several ways.

Therefore, this document aims to propose a number of landmarks in order to

- Align our common understanding of what these “voluntary commitments” mean;
- Agree on the possible content of those commitments, as a project deliverable.

These landmarks will enable us to guide the work planned for all stakeholders involved in BIODEV2030 in the pilot countries: UICN and WWF-France (Headquarters/Regions/Nationwide) CDB Focal Points, recruited consultants, stakeholders and representatives in private sectors, etc.

Definition and criteria proposed for voluntary commitment for BIODEV2030

General definition:

A voluntary commitment (VC) is defined within the framework of BIODEV2030 as “an agreement whereby one or several stakeholders undertake in order to mobilise and set up a series of prospective and strategic actions, which are shared and science based and which will bring about a positive and measurable change in biodiversity health.”

A VC can be undertaken by an individual or a group of stakeholders.

The commitment of these players will include a moral dimension and an action plan detailing how it will be implemented.

BIODEV2030 Criteria:

Within the framework of BIODEV2030, the voluntary commitments will ideally be undertaken on the scale of an economic sector (or another group of stakeholders as appropriate) and/or a territory. In this case they should be obtained by consensus following an inclusive process of discussion and negotiation, involving all the players and the stakeholders.

A VC should also:

- Be formalised in writing
- Be made public
- Contain quantitative elements
- Contain time frames (intermediate dates, final dates for the achievement of goals)
- Designate the players and resources planned to implement actions and reach the targets
- Include SMART indicators and objectives which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound
- Be accompanied by a robust monitoring and assessment system managed on a national scale.

¹ Measurement, Reporting and Verification

Although BIODEV2030 objective is to prioritise VCs from economic sectors, other actors also have a role to play which could feature in the VC. Thus, the VCs could also, as appropriate:

- Propose a distribution of efforts among the various types of players or among regions
- Propose a role for actors from civil society (NGOs, representatives of local communities, indigenous peoples, etc...) in the governance of implementing VCs
- List a series of accompanying measures which would be the responsibility of the State or financial institutions, and which, if put in place would facilitate their wider acceptance and/or more rapid or long lasting implementation

Preliminary phases prior to devising and discussing specific voluntary commitments planned within the framework of the “BIODEV2030” methodology (non-exhaustive list)

The 4 preliminary phases for voluntary commitments envisaged in the framework of BIODEV2030 methodology are as follows:

1. Scientific diagnosis of threats (Study 1) permitting identification of
 - a. the main threats /pressures in the zone of interest and the economic sectors with which they are associated (urban development, agriculture, extraction, etc.);
 - b. the most relevant strategies for reducing pressures or for restoring ecosystems in respect of the situation under assessment;
 - c. the pertinent field of action and, in the territory under consideration, the actions that need to be taken. The “landscape” approach enables all the changes to practices in different sectors to be considered, and envisages their inter-sectoral cooperation.
2. Mapping of the players involved, their interests and their roles (Study 2)
3. Identification of best possible practices (Study 2)
 - a. Who can/must change their practices?
 - b. Which new practices should they adopt and what knowledge/competences are already available in respect of these ²?
4. Comprehension of the context in which the stakeholders from the sectors are able to either put a brake on or create leverage (Study 2) namely, in an institutional, cultural, geographic, territorial context, etc.

It is on the basis of a preliminary understanding of these 4 points that voluntary commitments will be created.

² During the agreement phase with multiple stakeholders, there is a risk that they will hold back and will prioritise international best practices. In order to anticipate this bias, it would be helpful to establish here that these best practices could derive from an endogenous approach, relying on traditional local knowledge. Thus, the VCs undertaken within the framework of BIODEV2030 could contribute on this scale and value the most pertinent of these already existing at a community, local or national level, even those of an emergent or modest nature. This would open up interesting perspectives in matters of inclusive governance, territorialisation of commitments and social acceptability of these voluntary measures.

Recommendations for formulating a high-quality voluntary commitment.

As a minimum, each commitment should follow the logic proposed below however, this should be scaled to the particular context (stakeholders, landscapes etc.)

	Recommendation	To be specified
Problem addressed	The VC is explicitly described with reference to the DPSIR framework (Driver, Pressure, State, Impact, and Response).	The stakeholders involved The field of action
Scope of expected change		Definition of an indicator representing the expected impact on biodiversity
“Practices/solutions” to be implemented by stakeholders in the economic sector in order to achieve this change	Best practices and necessary actions for reducing pressure on biodiversity by sector, or the restoration of ecosystems (based on the most appropriate strategy identified in the diagnosis) <i>(previously identified as a result of a keen understanding of the nature of the sector in the country, or in a given region).</i>	The role of each player in implementing this task Specific plan of action for each one Indicate the actions on which implementation depends either on networking or a collaborative approach between several actors (for example, resulting from a situation of interdependence). Intermediate goals measuring the quality of this collaboration could be defined.
“Additional measures”: Measures that need to be put in place by other players (the State, NGOs, financial stakeholders...) in order to permit or speed up this change	Other means/actions that other stakeholders need to implement in order to encourage ambitious change and the adoption of good practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical means (change/adapting regulations or the law, incentives, taxes, grants...) - New state resources for implementing existing regulations such as, for example, financial means (investment, aid...) or human resources (training, creating awareness or reinforcing the capacity of stakeholders...) - Resources for coordination of players involved - Investments in infrastructures - Technical tools such as GIS - Promotion of committed players and promotion of CV in respect of the general public and consumers, etc. <i>(previously identified as a result of a keen understanding of the</i>	The role of each player in implementing this task Specific plan of action for each one Idem: Indicate the actions on which implementation depends either on networking or a collaborative approach between several actors (for example, resulting from a situation of interdependence). Intermediate goals measuring the quality of this collaboration could be defined. Please note that the VCs should not result in each entity simply waiting for the other to take the first step. The VC should contain a minimum number of actions that those committed to it could carry out even if the “enabling conditions” were not yet in evidence.

	<i>nature of the sector in the country or in a given region)</i>	
Quantified objectives and with a trajectory of 10 years	<p>For this inclusion over time, use milestones with a reference date (in respect of which the changes made in practice will be compared), a final date, and possible intermediate dates.</p> <p>The objectives and trajectories (final and intermediary targets) of the voluntary commitments (VC) are science based and in particular with respect to the scientific diagnosis of Stage 1 of the BIODEV2030 project.</p>	<p>Definition of the indicators to be measured and aggregated from individual players up to “group” level</p> <p>Objectives should be “SMART”</p>
Intermediate results expected for the period	<p>The description of the VC explicitly formulates one or more final and intermediate science based objectives, (in particular with respect to the scientific diagnosis of Stage 1 of the BIODEV2030 project), the resources for achieving these goals and a strategy explaining how the means to be implemented will help goals to be achieved.</p>	<p>Inclusion in the VC of a robust monitoring and assessment system managed on a national scale. An initial overview (reference situation) will enable the situation in a territory to be characterised prior to implementing the VC. This is indispensable for generating exhaustive and reliable data in contexts where statistics are often thin on the ground, if not non-existent. Monitoring the implementation of VCs (information on specific indicators taken in context) is moreover, a tool that will provide an in-depth understanding of the impacts of the VC.</p>

Subsequently it will be important to:

- Compile data and publish it on a regular basis
- Review the goals and objectives based on results
- Ensure that the human and financial resources and those of any other kind required, are available for effective implementation of actions and monitoring and assessment systems
- Monitoring the correct implementation of voluntary commitment, using specific indicators describing the resources to be mobilised.

Examples (fictional) of the formulation of a BIODEV2030 voluntary commitment:

“In region x of the country, and, agricultural production of crop z has increased since (year) above all through an increase in cultivated surfaces (Driver). This increase in cultivated surfaces has been particularly detrimental to forestry land, which accounts for a significant part (α) of the country’s biodiversity, terrain which is burned prior to being planted (Pressure) Forest habitats and numerous species are destroyed. The species that depend on these habitats disappear, and their conservation status deteriorates (state) and a number of ecosystem services from which human populations benefit are greatly reduced and may possibly even disappear (Impact) In order to halt the phenomenon of converting forests to cultivated lands, agricultural stakeholders have decided to massively change their farming practices. The objective (Response) of X, Y and Z is to halve, by 2025, the number of hectares of forest converted to agricultural land compared to 2015, and by 2030 to reach “zero hectares of forest converted to agricultural land” and to maintain this objective beyond that date. Furthermore, agricultural stakeholders in the region undertake, by 2030, to restore in forest lands, 30% of the former forest terrain converted to agricultural land from 2000 to 2015. 15% by 2025 was set as a crossing point.

In order to attain these goals, the following means (Response) will be employed

- Means 1
- Means 2
- Etc. ”

Here, the VC lists the activities and resources which will be implemented and which will permit goals to be attained. This will enable the VC to be set in the context of a specific implementation procedure rather than confine it solely to a description of the objective. The means in question may be technical, financial, human etc. They may be broken down into types of stakeholders (economic sectors and others) and they should take into account their abilities expressed in the (bilateral or multi-party) dialogue. The VC should be accompanied by a plan of action detailing these means and resources.

Examples of possible complementary actions to improve practices and reduce pressure on biodiversity (non exhaustive list)

Sectors	Actions
Agriculture	Plans for agro-ecological intensification of cultivated areas, sustainable agricultural practices and certification Commitments to reduce quantities per hectare of synthetic chemical inputs (pesticides, herbicides, fertilisers, fungicides, etc.) Commitments to economical, efficient and fair water management
	Development of networks of local people to share experiences, knowledge and services (at a local, regional, or national scale)
	Zoning of land use – Buffer zone between PA and agricultural
	Contractualisation of payments for environmental /ecosystem services (PES) based on indicators defined according to the local context (% of species indicating biodiversity of the biome for example)
	Certifications: EU Organic Label, Natureland, Demeter, USDA Organic, JAS, RSPO, UTZ
	Zero deforestation/traceability of supplies
	Control of investments and land acquisitions (combating land grabbing) and/or commitment to setting up sustainable practices on these lands
Forestry	REDD+ Initiatives
	System of timber legality/traceability and guarantee
	Payments for environmental/ecosystem services (PES)
	Zero deforestation/traceability of supplies Sustainability and certification standards (FSC)
Fishing	Certifications: MSC (Marine Stewardship Council), Natureland, Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP), Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), Global GAP, etc.
	Voluntary fishing prohibition zones
	TTED (Trash and Turtle Excluder Device) selectivity system by shrimp trawlers or other selective fishing systems Contribution to initiatives for combating IUU fishing Deployment of ICZMQ principles Contribution to deployment and network of protected and managed marine areas and educational marine areas
Mines	Selection of exploitation sites according to mitigation hierarchy doctrine with detailed and documented justification of the E and R stages prior to seeking compensation Setting up of compensatory measures/programmes (intensification of the mitigation hierarchy “Compensate” sequence)
	Creation of management and restoration plans for the site following the exploitation phase

	Taking into account biodiversity <i>ex ante</i> and <i>in itinere</i> of the environmental impacts of a project (inventory of fauna and flora and choice of design, etc.)
	Gold production practices without using mercury
	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) global standard
	Certification: IRMA, VDMD, Fair Stone, etc.
Firewood and charcoal	Exploitation permit system Management plan designed for exploitation of firewood forests Promotion of alternatives (biomass briquettes, improved fireplace, etc.)

Relative criteria for the manufacturing process of a quality voluntary commitment:

Good governance, and in particular the inclusive nature (and the recognition of the multiple interests and values) of the process of constructing a VC is as important as its content. The association and effective participation of all the stakeholders concerned will reinforce the opportunities for good appropriation of the VC which will increase the success of its implementation, monitoring and assessment.

The VCs should be discussed to the degree that is necessary and should be created jointly by all the legitimate stakeholders involved, in the sector or in the region, with the emphasis on players with spear heading ability in respect of other players (“opinion leaders”). The issues, objectives, means and consequences of the VC should be understood and appropriated by each stakeholder. These discussions could be clarified by complementary analyses.

Some key attitudes will permit effective joint construction and excellent appropriation of the VC, Be committed!

- Create a sense of pride and demonstrate the added value of the VC for each stakeholder.
- The key is to obtain the support of all sectors of society so that businesses do not feel isolated but instead feel that they are contributing for the good of all.
- Global business players should also be involved if they are part of the value chain as buyers of raw materials or finished products, and you should ensure that they measure and acknowledge the efforts undertaken.
- Envisage mechanisms for monitoring progress and communicating this: a national register; a price; an annual conference; a website – all for celebrating progress.

The VC should therefore be a written document which should be made public for example, it would be available on line for an extensive period on official websites (businesses, government, etc.). It should be drawn up in a transparent manner with equally transparent content. On these internet sites it should subsequently be appropriate to evaluate through positive communications, the efforts and undertakings of the stakeholders.

In the absence of a consensus, the arguments of the stakeholders who are most opposed, should be understood, noted and the resources for accompanying the players who are the most exposed to possible short term losses should be reflected on and proposed.

Formats types of voluntary commitment (non exhaustive list)

- Territorial charter: This “Code of good conduct” engages all the players of one or several economic sectors present **in a defined territory, as well as any future new entrant** who must subscribe to it in order to operate in the territory. The territorial charter may contain SMART objectives for this territory and they may be developed as SMART objectives for each of the sectors that are active in this territory;
- Agreement of multiple players at national level: this agreement engages signatories who will adopt new practices wherever they operate in national territory;
- Agreement of multiple players at regional level, this agreement engages signatories who will adopt new practices wherever they operate in regional territory;
- Engagement Contract state sector and in region x;
- etc.