COP17 Call to Action on High-Integrity Nature Markets

Building the Foundations for Trust, Accountability and Positive Outcomes for Nature and People

We, representatives of businesses, financial institutions, investors, civil society, international and multilateral organizations, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, project developers, and other stakeholders, recognize the urgent need to strengthen collective action for nature to support implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).

Public finance, regulation and government action remain essential, including reforming environmentally harmful subsidies and driving corporate transitions in operations and supply chains. These measures are fundamental to achieving the objectives of the KMGBF and maintaining market integrity. Nature markets are not a substitute for these responsibilities, nor for the mitigation hierarchy. However, nature markets can play an important complementary role where they are based on the principles of science and integrity and underpinned by effective governance, safeguards, transparency and accountability, delivering tangible nature benefits, while supporting local livelihoods and economic resilience.

As COP17 marks a critical moment to accelerate the implementation of the KMGBF, we call on governments, financial institutions, companies, Indigenous People and Local Communities, civil society and international organizations to work together on strengthening the integrity, transparency and credibility of nature markets.

Building upon the High-Level Principles to Guide the Biodiversity Credit Market, we call on all market participants to align with three main areas:

- Effective governance of nature markets: creating effective policies and enabling conditions,
- High-integrity supply of nature projects employing efficient project cycles,
- High-integrity demand for nature projects based on trust, transparency and responsible market participation.

The Role of Governments: Creating Effective Policies and Enabling Conditions

We recognize that policy certainty, legal clarity and effective market governance serve as a foundation for trust and informed participation in nature markets.

- Governments can create confidence in voluntary and – where appropriate – compliance nature markets through their legal recognition; adoption of policies, regulations and guidance on ownership and claims; transparent oversight arrangements; fiscal incentives; policies governing market integrity, transparency, rights protection and public accountability.

- We further call upon Governments to integrate nature markets into national biodiversity strategies and action plans and sectoral and national development strategies.

Building Effective Project Cycles

Market participants and Governments are encouraged to work together to ensure availability of quality equitable methodologies with effective monitoring, reporting and verification modules; transparent registries, and trustworthy assessment and assurance frameworks.

- The development and application of common integrity tools based on the application of High-Level Principles and Assessment Framework and other good-practice guidance, can support consistency, transparency and continuous improvement of the quality of supply.
- Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities must be empowered as principal partners and leaders through the full realization of their rights under international laws and principles, including meaningful participation in projects and governance, ownership of resources, equitable benefit-sharing, employment, and data sovereignty. Their Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) must be obtained unconditionally as a prerequisite for the implementation of any project.
- Safeguards should be put in place to prevent double counting and double claiming and stop fraudulent paper "projects", protect rights and livelihoods, and avoid unintended consequences such as land grabbing, market distortions or displacement of food production.

Stimulating demand

Trust is essential to the credibility and responsible evolution of the demand for nature market projects. Building and maintaining trust requires transparency, responsible participation, and clarity of expectations.

- Governments, development finance institutions, philanthropic organizations, civil society, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, businesses and other stakeholders should collaborate to advance shared understanding of good practices, strengthen institutional capacities and promote transparency and accountability.
- Collaborative initiatives, market accelerators using catalytic funding, and learning can help test approaches, build evidence, identify risks and strengthen the integrity of nature markets.
- Companies, financial institutions and other market participants can contribute by promoting responsible participation, transparent disclosure, adherence to the mitigation hierarchy, credible claims and communications practices, and alignment with emerging demand-side integrity expectations.

- Digital foundations, including transparent registries, traceability systems, interoperable data infrastructure and accountability mechanisms, can further strengthen confidence, transparency and informed decision-making across the ecosystem.

Conclusion

Through alignment around these three focus areas of governance, supply and demand, we can stimulate development of nature markets. By prioritizing integrity, safeguards, rights-based approaches, assessment and assurance frameworks, responsible claims, and robust digital foundations, we can build the trust needed to support positive outcomes for nature and people and contribute to the goals of the KMGBF.