

COHAB 2
Second International Conference on Health and Biodiversity
Galway, Ireland, 25th to 28th February 2008

Satellite Workshop:

Business and Ecosystems
Innovation, opportunities and challenges for the private sector

Friday, 29th February 2008

The COHAB Initiative Secretariat will convene a special discussion forum on the theme “**Business and Ecosystems – innovation, opportunities and challenges for the private sector**”, in Galway, Ireland, on Friday 29th February 2008.

The aims of this workshop are:

- To examine the business case for nature conservation,
- To explore business opportunities and challenges associated with biodiversity, including the risks associated with climate change,
- To discuss the tools available to help business managers identify options for developing new markets based on ecosystem services,
- To pool experience and perspectives from the private sector.

The Workshop is supported by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, member States of the European Union, and the Céifin Centre. Participation is open to decision makers within the private sector and government institutions, representatives of businesses and industry bodies, entrepreneurs, financiers and economists, environmental professionals, and other stakeholders.

Background

The sustainability of economic growth is entirely dependent upon the sustainability of the world’s environment, an issue that is increasingly being recognised by business and industry, and reflected in ever more stringent and complex regulation.

Global economic activities are maintained by the goods and services derived from nature. Essential supplies of fresh water, food resources, clean air, fuel, fibre and medicines are provided through the functioning of the world’s ecosystems. In addition, ecosystems also provide other important services, including disease control, flood mitigation, soil formation, climate regulation, recreation and tourism amenities, nutrient cycling, waste decomposition, and pollution control, amongst others, which are vital to the functioning of a healthy economy. Placing a monetary value on many of these services is difficult, and in many cases their value is best considered not in terms of a financial worth that is gained, but in terms of insured security of resource supply, or in terms of losses prevented or offset. Most of these benefits cannot be replicated by technology, or cannot be provided by humans on a scale adequate to meet the demands of society.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment recently reported that two thirds of the world’s ecosystem services are being degraded, and that the ability of many ecosystems to sustain the flow of essential services is being compromised. This represents a significant challenge to human well-being and economic development worldwide, and directly threatens efforts towards global poverty reduction.

An additional challenge is presented by the prospect of climate change, which is already affecting the sustainability of ecosystem services and affecting businesses in many

regions. The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, commissioned by the UK Government and published in 2007, highlighted the severity of potential impacts on economies which may struggle to cope with the impacts of a changing climate.

However, both the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the Stern Review also identified many opportunities for improved governance, for a more secure and healthy society, and for more profitable business, based on the protection and enhancement of the flow and security of ecosystem goods and services. Novel business models based on resource efficient and environmentally sound products and services are increasingly being developed and applied worldwide. Economic sectors, from tourism to agriculture, manufacturing to energy supply, are shifting towards a new ideology that includes environmental sustainability as a cornerstone of successful, profitable business and enterprise – innovative new ventures that work to protect commercial interests and human well-being at the same time.

The Workshop

The workshop will form part of a week of international discussions on biodiversity and human well-being, taking place in Galway, Ireland, centred around the Second International Conference on Health and Biodiversity (COHAB 2). The event will aim to support efforts leading from Decision VIII/17 of the eighth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP8) in Curitiba, Brazil, in 2006, and build on the outputs from the conference on Business and Biodiversity held in Lisbon, Portugal in November 2007.

Presentations by leading experts on the issues of biodiversity and business will be combined with open discussions and working group exercises. Working groups will aim to develop awareness and understanding of the issues, to develop business capacity for addressing risks and opportunities, and to share experiences of dealing with these issues in a business setting.

The workshop will cover five themes:

The Business Case for Biodiversity

Explaining the rationale for business involvement in biodiversity conservation; recent research, publications and thinking on business and ecosystems.

What's Happening at Policy Level

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and other U.N. programmes; European Union policy and legislation; How business can get involved.

How to Identify Risks and Opportunities

Tools and methods for identifying business challenges and opportunities associated with biodiversity; Auditing, benchmarks, sustainability reporting and certification schemes.

Creating New Markets in Different Sectors

Markets for ecosystem goods and services; How to support businesses that are inherently "green"; How other businesses can improve their performance; Setting new standards; "Natural Capitalism" – governance, innovation and opportunity in the 21st Century.

Country and Company Experience

Case studies of sectoral and national perspectives on business and ecosystems issues. In line with the theme of the COHAB 2 conference on health and biodiversity, this will include discussions on health-related industries, including pharmaceuticals, public and animal healthcare etc, as well as other sectors with a role to play in human well-being, such as tourism and food production.

Workshop Outputs

Delegates at the workshop will work to identify the greatest opportunities and challenges relating to nature conservation for their sector. A report on the outputs from the discussions will be published in April 2008. The report will be presented for consideration at the ninth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP9) in Bonn, Germany, in May 2008. A summary of the workshop will also be published in the "Business 2010" newsletter of the CBD Secretariat.

Tentative timetable:

08.30 – 09.00	Registration
09.00 – 09.10	Welcome
09.10 – 09.35	<i>Presentation</i>
09.35 – 10.00	<i>Presentation</i>
10.00 – 10.25	<i>Presentation</i>
10.25 – 10.50	Discussion
10.50 – 11.10	<i>Refreshments</i>
11.10 – 11.35	<i>Presentation</i>
11.35 – 12.00	<i>Presentation</i>
12.00 – 12.40	Working Groups
12.40 – 13.40	<i>Lunch</i>
13.40 – 14.05	Feedback from Working Groups
14.05 – 14.30	<i>Presentation</i>
14.30 – 14.55	<i>Presentation</i>
14.55 – 15.15	Discussion
15.15 – 15.20	CLOSE
