

## Towards a Biodiversity Areas Standard

In 2008, the Parties to the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** agreed to “improve actions and cooperation for enhancing the engagement of the business community” and to “come forward with new and innovative financing mechanisms in support of the strategy for resource mobilization.” In 2010, the Parties further agreed that “by 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources... should increase substantially.

In response, the **Green Development Initiative (GDI)** aims to establish an international standard and registration process for biodiversity-responsible area management. By registering and certifying biodiversity areas, the GDI approach will facilitate voluntary efforts to reward responsible management authorities directly for their efforts to conserve biodiversity and to use its components sustainably and equitably.

## Conserving our planet, hectare by hectare

A ‘**Biodiversity Area**’ is a geographically-defined area which is managed to achieve the CBD objectives of conserving biodiversity and using its components sustainably and equitably in the context of sustainable development.

The **Biodiversity Area Standard** will include not only the CBD objectives but also a set of area management requirements such as a precise definition of the area and confirmation of its management authority, undertaking of a biodiversity baseline assessment including stakeholder consultations, drafting of a 5-year biodiversity area management plan with targets, actions and indicators; and a monitoring and reporting protocol including annual reports.

The **Biodiversity Area Registration Process** will start with the nomination of an area by a responsible management authority. Once the area’s baseline assessment and management plan

has been submitted and verified, the biodiversity area will be registered for a 5-year period. Through an independent auditing process, the biodiversity area can also be certified.

An online **Biodiversity Area Registry** will be established to list Registered Biodiversity Areas and Certified Biodiversity Areas. Managers will also have the option to list their Nominated Biodiversity Areas.

As these areas can be measured in hectares, the GDI approach creates a measurable unit of biodiversity - a **Biodiversity Hectare** - which can be used by area managers, companies, investors, public sector authorities and others to target their efforts and resources to specific area-based sets of transparent and accountable biodiversity actions. Biodiversity hectares could either be registered or certified under the proposed approach.

## Developing the GDI approach, step by step

**01 February 2012.** Following the launch of Version 0 and Version 00 of the Reference Guide for public consultation, a new version is under preparation. This version will be available online later this month along with a revised paper on the business case for the GDI approach.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Expert Meeting of the GDI will take place in Sao Paulo, Brazil, at the end of March. It will focus on the business case for registered or certified biodiversity hectares. It will also explore

how the GDI approach can contribute to the CBD Biodiversity Strategy for 2020 and to the RIO+20 deliberations on the green economy.

Efforts continue to secure much needed funding for a ‘proof-of-concept’ phase for the GDI which would field test the biodiversity standard and registration scheme and, through a portfolio of pilot projects, engage the private sector and other stakeholders in refining the approach and strengthening its capacity to scale up.

## We welcome your engagement & support!

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