The EU B@B Platform extractive industry workshop has gathered representatives from companies and sectoral associations to present best case studies, discuss the principles of best practice implementation and among other topics discuss criteria for benchmarking and acknowledging them.

Holcim Granulats France and UEPG presented best case studies. The complexity for the extractive industry to open quarries is one of the main issues for companies: responsible public entities request companies to collect and submit a large amount of information and justification. However, the extractive industry has been dealing with environmental issues for a long time. Most of extractive companies have been involved in biodiversity conservation for decades and the companies’ knowledge on these issues is highly valuable. Extractive companies, in many cases together with environmental NGOs, are working on restoring habitats and enhancing biodiversity on their sites.

Moreover, the extractive industry has been gathering information and data through their biodiversity conservation operations. Since the extractive sites biodiversity is very special, the data is of interest for the sector as well as for the civil society which works on after-mining management. It is then important for the sector to communicate its achievements and knowledge of biodiversity.

Communication is an important issue for the sector since it is often criticized for its impacts on the environment. The sector has to communicate facts and figures accepted by both the industry and civil society.

Regarding benchmarking, three frameworks have been presented: the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) frameworks. Each one has its specificities: the IFC is short and easily readable, addressing both conservation and sustainable use of natural resources; the GRI has a specific section on extractive industry assessing social and environmental issues; and the ICMM is structured upon the life-cycle analysis, including all phases of extractive activities. GRI seems to be widely used within the industry.

Benchmarking is important for designing the Platform Award Scheme, which will recognize companies’ efforts in protecting biodiversity.