CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN A WORKING GROUP ON 'NO NET LOSS' OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND THEIR SERVICES, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EU BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY TO 2020

The EU has set itself the ambitious goal of halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services by 2020, and restoring them as far as feasible. The EU biodiversity strategy to 2020\(^1\) translates this headline objective into 6 mutually supportive and inter-dependent targets. Target 2 in particular requires that by 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems. The Commission has announced a 'no net loss' initiative by 2015 as part of a list of actions to reach this target.

The Resource Efficiency roadmap emphasises the role of Market Based Instruments for achieving resource efficiency. Amongst the actions included in the Roadmap is the further promotion of the use of innovative financial instruments and market based instruments, in cooperation with the European Investment Bank and through public private partnerships. The roadmap also reiterates the commitment to a 'no net loss' initiative in 2015 to foster investments in natural capital and to seize the full growth and innovation potential of the 'restoration economy'.

The Council Conclusions of 19 December 2011 agreed that a common approach is needed for the implementation in the EU of the 'no net loss' principle and invited the Commission to address this as part of the preparation of its planned initiative on 'no net loss' by 2015, taking into account existing experience as well as the specificities of each Member State, on the basis of in-depth discussions with Member States and stakeholders regarding the clear definition, scope, operating principles and management and support instruments in the context of the common implementation framework of the Strategy. The conclusions also give a preliminary definition of this concept: 'that conservation/biodiversity losses in one geographically or otherwise defined area are balanced by a gain elsewhere provided that this principle does not entail any impairment of existing biodiversity as protected by EU nature legislation (document 11978/11)'\(^2\).

Within the mandate of the 2011 December Council conclusions, the Commission is setting up a Working Group on No Net Loss of Ecosystem and their Services, to collect views from Member State representatives and stakeholders on the way forward for the 'no net loss' initiative announced for 2015.

The Working Group will meet three times during 2012. The first meeting of the Working Group will be held on 17 February 2012, from 9.00 to 17.00, at the Beaulieu 5 building of the European Commission (Avenue de Beaulieu 5, 1160 Brussels). The objective of this first meeting is to agree the mandate and structure of the Working Group, to discuss a roadmap for the 'no net loss' initiative, and to discuss the definition of the 'no net loss' concept and the scope of the initiative, based on existing experience in EU Member States and beyond. The meeting will be held in English.

Participation is open to Member States and all interested stakeholders. You can confirm your interest in this meeting by filling in the attached table and submitting it before 31

\(^1\) COM(2011) 244 final
January 2012 via e-mail to ENV-BIODIVERSITY@ec.europa.eu. Due to the limited capacity of the venue, and to ensure constructive and focused discussions, invitations will be limited to one individual per organisation and priority will be given to organisations representing the views of stakeholders at EU level. Participants will be selected in a way to ensure a fair and representative participation of stakeholders. Those who are selected as Working Group members will be sent a formal invitation by 3 February 2012 to the first meeting of the Working Group, with further details on the meeting venue and agenda. In order to facilitate preparation for the meeting and reflection on the issue, we will disseminate background documents for the meeting in due course.

Stakeholders will have the possibility to express their position in writing for up to two weeks after the meeting.