

Align Community of Practice

Terms of Reference

Objective

Address gaps in knowledge, tools and the lack of standardisation relating to measuring, accounting for and disclosing biodiversity performance within existing biodiversity measurement, natural capital accounting, sustainability reporting and environmental management approaches.

Term

The Align Community of Practice will run throughout the lifespan of the project (2021 – 2023).

Membership

The Align Community of Practice is comprised of a group of roughly 100 businesses, financial practitioners, and experts working on (or starting to work on) biodiversity measurement and natural capital management accounting.

The Align Community of Practice will link closely to the Finance Community of Practice already in place under the EU Business@Biodiversity Platform to ensure synergies and efficiencies between membership requests.

Participation within the Align Community of Practice will be reviewed on an annual basis. People that are unable to participate at a minimum of 1 in-person event and 2 online events will be requested to join the Align Community of Interest to allow the position to be filled by other interested people.

Roles and Responsibilities

Members of the Align Community of Practice are expected to engage in the activities outlined below, to ensure all outputs developed are relevant and fit-for-purpose for businesses and financial institutions.

*Individuals participating in activities related to **biodiversity measurement** will be expected to contribute to the following:*

- Sharing experiences of best practice to encourage peer-to-peer learning;
- Helping to develop a standardised approach to biodiversity measurement by testing the draft guidance and/or standards, and providing feedback to the Consortium;
- Feedback on a shortlist of initiatives that the project will link to and engage with, which will be developed with an initial desktop review and subsequent discussions within the Align Community of Practice and Advisory Board. The shortlist will be presented to the European Commission at end December 2021;
- Build momentum to achieve a critical mass of companies employing a standardised measurement approach.

*Individuals participating in activities related to **natural capital management accounting** will be expected to contribute to the following:*

- Identifying state of the art natural capital management accounting practices suitable for integrating environmental impacts and dependencies across the value chain in routine business & financial institution decisions;
- Participating in 10 seminar sessions that will be held across the project as follows:
 - 3 sessions will be held at the in-person meeting in Year 1 (2021);
 - 4 sessions will be held at the in-person meeting in Year 2 (2022); and

- 3 sessions will be held at the in-person meeting in Year 3 (2023).
- Testing and/or validating proposals for standardised natural capital management accounting practices and guidelines applying generally and to specific sectors;
- Facilitating best practice exchange between practitioners & relevant stakeholders
- Establishing a foundation to help embed of biodiversity measurement into natural capital management accounting.

Members of the Align Community of Practice are encouraged, but not expected to participate in activities for both biodiversity measurement **and** natural capital management accounting.

Members of the Align Community of Practice expect the consortium to:

- Provide an appropriate amount of time to book travel to in-person events (where able to attend in person) with 2 months' notice of venue location and event dates;
- Provide sufficient time to review and provide feedback on project deliverables (1 week minimum);

Participation at In-Person Meetings

The Align Community of Practice will meet twice annually throughout the lifespan of the project (running from 2021 – 2023).

- It is anticipated that the Align Community of Practice will meet on the following months:

Year 1	May 2021	November 2021
Year 2	April 2022	November 2022
Year 3	May 2023	September 2023

- Most meetings will be held in Brussels. Additional meeting locations proposed include France, the Netherlands and Spain, however, these locations may change. Meetings will be held online if travel is not possible;
- It is anticipated that a ½ day seminar relating to natural capital management accounting and 1-day seminar on Aligning biodiversity measurement will be held on consecutive days to ensure efficiency in travel and allow Align Community of Practice members to attend both discussion topics, if interested.
- Relevant pre-read materials will be circulated to Align Community of Practice members one week before each meeting, and meeting minutes will be circulated one week after each in-person meeting.
- Each meeting will include time to present updates on measurement approaches and the results of piloting, share lessons learned, reconfirm the issues addressed, explore technical challenges in more detail and identify training, research, education and innovation actions and needs.
- Meeting minutes will be captured by members of the Consortium. All materials will be sent by the Align Project Manager (Elise Belle, WCMC Europe).

Online Engagement

It is anticipated that members of the Align Community of Practice will attend two to three online workshops per year (~2 hours each) and undertake the following activities:

- Complete annual surveys (three total)
- Comment on emailed documents within the time specified (minimum of 1 week)

Online community collaboration will be encouraged through the newly launched collaboration space, hosted by the Capitals Coalition and managed by ICF. This will allow Align Community of Practice members to communicate with one another and the wider Align Community of Interest, be kept up to date with emerging outputs and notified of Align events, as well as relevant events being held by other organisations within the community.

Resources

It is hoped that members can commit to in-kind participation on the Align Community of Practice and attendance at in-person meetings. Travel and expenses to attend in-person meetings is not able to be provided by the Align project.

Amendment, Modification or Variation

The Terms of Reference outlined within this document may be modified and/or amended in writing after consulting with the members of this group.