

Align Technical Hub

Terms of Reference

Objective

Progress thinking on technical issues for discussion and agreement at Align Community of Practice meetings. Responsible for identifying opportunities for Alignment through technical discussion on available biodiversity measurement approaches and real-life applications. Help develop the foundation for scientifically robust, standardised and Aligned approaches on biodiversity measurement and biodiversity-inclusive natural capital management accounting practices. Act as technical support to the Align Community of Practice.

Term

The Align Technical Hub will run throughout the lifespan of the project (2021 – 2023).

Membership

The Align Technical Hub is comprised of biodiversity measurement tool developers and technical specialists. Members of the Technical Hub are seen as a subset of the Align Community of Practice and will be convened virtually to discuss specific technical subjects throughout the lifespan of the project.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Technical Hub will be responsible for identifying and elaborating comparability and Alignment between different measurement approaches and identifying material for developing standardised biodiversity-inclusive natural capital management accounting practices.

The Align Technical Hub will be used to:

- Inform the development of sector specific guidance and linking modules;
- Provide lessons learned from piloting methodologies;
- Provide opportunities and recommendations for linking to the work of existing initiatives;
- Participate in the development of a standard to promote the uptake of biodiversity measurement and disclosure into natural capital accounting;
- Discuss identified weaknesses (presented through case study assessment and piloting outcomes), with a specific focus on generating recommended improvements;
- Provide suggestions for key areas of Alignment (e.g. agree a set of common input indicators across methodologies etc.) and progress made between meetings and a technical paper produced as a result;
- Provide input into the draft document that details '*Generally accepted methods, indicators and criteria for corporate biodiversity measurement*';
- Assist in the development of a paper detailing the principles, concepts and areas of technical Alignment;
- Provide feedback on the education, research and innovation needs/opportunities that have not been addressed in the finalised sector guidance and modules and need to be further built on in the future. Needs are likely to include:
 - Improving existing methodologies and tools to assess impacts and dependencies on natural capital and biodiversity;
 - Assessing changes in natural systems through business adoption of standards across landscape, geographic areas, sectors;
 - Broadening and improving the work that has been done (links with OEF et PEF, circular economy, etc...).

Members of the Align Technical Hub 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);
- Provide opportunities to discuss identified risks at relevant meetings as appropriate.

Participation at In-Person Meetings

Align Technical Hub members will be required to attend two annual in-person meetings held by the Align Community of Practice.

- Events are proposed to occur at the following dates:

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

- Most meetings are anticipated to occur 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 Technical Hub members to attend both discussion topics, if interested;
- Relevant pre-read materials will be circulated to Align Technical Hub 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 Technical Hub members will attend one or two online workshops per year (~2 hours each) and undertake the following online activities:

- Complete annual surveys (one per year)
- Comment on emailed documents within the time specified (minimum of 1 week)

It is anticipated that the Align Technical Hub workshops will discuss a number of items (e.g. analysis of measurement approaches, content and nature of sector guidance, suggestions for linking biodiversity measurement to natural capital accounting methodologies). Discussions will feed into a single report on the Alignment of measurement approaches, and results of each session will be reported back to the wider Align Community of Practice.

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 Technical Hub members to communicate with one another and the wider Align Community of Interest and Community of Practice, 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 Technical Hub and attendance at in-person meetings. Travel and expenses to attend in-person meetings is not able to be provided for Technical Hub members 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