

Principles of Corporate Engagement

Working with companies as they seek to become more environmentally sustainable is a tremendous opportunity to create real conservation gains around the world.

For decades, The Nature Conservancy has recognized that the private sector has an important role to play in advancing our conservation mission. Businesses around the globe can, and do, have significant impacts on our climate and the lands and waters that people and nature rely upon for survival. That's why we are applying our science, reach, expertise in conservation planning, and on-the-ground experience to help businesses make better decisions, understand the value of nature, and ultimately protect it.

Our Philosophy and Criteria

The Conservancy is working across various industries and alongside communities to help advance our mission of protecting the natural world. The Conservancy evaluates and identifies ways to engage with companies that best align with our mission. There must be clear conservation benefits with lasting, measurable outcomes, and a direct connection to our mission.

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All corporate engagements must meet the Principles of Corporate Engagement or, if not, the engagement either should not be pursued or must be elevated for review by the Risk Assessment Committee (RAC).

- **Conservation Benefit First:** The proposed engagement must advance a Conservancy Global or Operating Unit priority and have a defined, tangible conservation benefit that includes places of major conservation value, or a strategy that significantly increases public awareness of conservation, or funding for conservation, or anticipates influencing changes in corporate practices, that will result in increased benefits to conservation with measurable results within three years.
- **No Endorsement:** The Conservancy's relationship with a corporation is in no way an implied or real endorsement of a corporation or industry. All public communications regarding corporate engagements are subject to prior agreement by the Conservancy and the corporation. No third party entity, including a business, may use the Conservancy's name and/or trademarks without explicit written permission.
- **No Undue Benefit:** The engagement must not result in private benefit to a corporation - whether a financial benefit or publicity - that exceeds the benefits received by the Conservancy and its mission. The level of promotion should be appropriate to the type of engagement.
- **Aligns with Mission and Values:** The engagement must be consistent with the Conservancy's Mission and Values and should respect the sensitivities of the Conservancy's members, donors, conservation partners and communities in which it works. Examples of potential compromise include a conflict of interest or an implication that the relationship will influence the Conservancy's science or priorities.

- *One Conservancy*: The engagement's conservation benefit must outweigh risk or potential damage to all Operating Units throughout the Conservancy.
- *Transparent and Independent Role of the Conservancy*: The Conservancy must always be publicly transparent about its role in and the use of analyses and data that may be produced as a result of a corporate engagement, including complying with the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Standards for Charity Accountability, when applicable. At the Conservancy's discretion, peer organizations, governments, the academic community, and other interested parties may be consulted about the conservation work. The engagement must always be on the following terms:
 - The Conservancy and the corporation agree that the primary analysis or work product is not proprietary to the corporation or association, will be freely offered to interested governmental agencies, other companies and stakeholders, and may be published in peer-reviewed scientific literature or other print media; and
 - The Conservancy will seek input on its analysis as appropriate from regulatory agencies and other key stakeholders; and
 - If the Conservancy's work is part of a regulatory process the Conservancy's science will be incorporated without editorial or substantive changes into the appropriate public record for review by other stakeholders; and
 - The Conservancy retains the option to publicly comment on the merits of any corporation's activities, development proposals or other matters that affect our conservation priorities.
 - The Conservancy will disclose the identities of companies with whom it engages and the nature and purpose of its corporate engagements.
 - The Conservancy will share general knowledge and expertise gained in corporate engagements to promote better conservation business practices and public policies at sectoral, national, and international levels.
- *Commitment By the Corporation to Conservation and Environmental Sustainability*: The company must demonstrate a commitment to advancing conservation and environmental objectives of significant, lasting, and measurable scope. The company must have policies or practices to address its significant environmental impacts or intend to develop these through or during its engagement with the Conservancy. The corporation must report transparently on its progress in implementing these policies and practices. The Conservancy will engage only when satisfied with the company's level of commitment and performance, as determined by due diligence.
- *Corporate Reputation, Policies, and Practices Not a Material Risk to TNC*: The corporation's reputation, policies, and practices must not present a material risk to the Conservancy's reputation or ability to achieve any of its conservation objectives that is greater than the achievable conservation benefits of the engagement. These risks include environmental risks; human rights violations or similar abuses by the corporation; prosecution of the corporation for illegalities; regulatory compliance failures in places or countries where the Conservancy works; or a highly-publicized controversy related to the corporation.
- *Conservancy Right to Terminate*: The Conservancy will continuously evaluate the conservation impact of its work with corporations, and may discontinue concrete corporate engagements if the impacts achieved are not satisfactory. The Conservancy must retain its unilateral right to terminate a corporate engagement for reasons relating to actual or potential reputational harm or legal compliance, breach of an agreement, and misuse of the Conservancy's intellectual property including the Conservancy's name.
- *Acceptance of Funds*: In conjunction with any corporate engagement, the Conservancy may accept funds from a corporation to support the development of a particular project or work product when:
 - It does not compromise, or appear to compromise, the Conservancy's independence, objectivity and science, and
 - It does not conflict with an existing engagement with the corporation.