

1. Title:

Protecting Half the Earth through a Global Deal for Nature serves as key to Nature-Based Climate Solutions

2. Context and rationale:

The Global Deal for Nature (GDN), launched April 2019, is a time-bound, science-driven plan to save the diversity and abundance of life, avoid catastrophic climate change, and secure essential ecosystem services¹. It is part of the Nature Needs Half (NNH) global network and movement. Climate models confirm an approaching tipping point: if trends in ecosystem conversion and emissions do not peak by 2030, it will become impossible to remain below 1.5°C². Similarly, if current land conversion rates, overfishing and other threats are not slowed/halted in 10 years, “points of no return” will manifest for ecosystems and species³. Re-greening through large-scale conservation, restoration and improved land/sea management – Nature-based Solutions (NBC) - are required to transition to a carbon neutral economy and stable climate⁴. Protecting/restoring at least 50% of the Earth’s land and sea areas is prerequisite for preventing mass extinctions⁵ and directly applicable to mitigating/adapting to climate change⁶.

3. Overview of the contribution:

To stay below a 1.5°C rise, we need, a rapid transition to 100% renewables by 2050 and a global effort to increase resilience of natural ecosystems, including moratoriums on land conversion by 2030 and a 400 GtCO₂ withdrawal from the atmosphere through land and sea restoration^{7,8}. A target to protect half of the Earth by 2030 (30% formally protected areas and additional 20% as Climate Stabilization Areas, CSAs, meeting the criteria for Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures, OECMs⁹ will achieve this.

4. How contribution leverages living natural systems:

The GDN advocates “aggressive” conservation of remaining, intact habitats (terrestrial, freshwater and marine) showing how an expanded global protected area system can save the majority of life. Special attention will be given to areas with low anthropogenic disturbance containing vast “carbon repositories”. A key GDN target is to maintain 85% forest cover in critical areas e.g. the Amazon, and identify specific areas for CSAs. It pinpoints ecoregions that can achieve protection targets by designation only (e.g. those with significant remaining habitat), and those where restoration is essential. Rewilding¹⁰, to restore structural and functional complexity of degraded ecosystems while gradually reducing human impact, will be promoted for biodiversity and climate change mitigation/adaptation benefits.

¹ <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/5/4/eaaw2869>

² <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-030-05843-2>

³ <https://www.pnas.org/content/115/33/8252.long>

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29078344>

⁵ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780124095489108681?via%3Dihub>

⁶ <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/5/4/eaaw2869>

⁷ <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-030-05843-2>

⁸ <https://bradfordlab.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/schmitz-et-al-2013-ecosystems.pdf>

⁹ <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/5/4/eaaw2869>

¹⁰ <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/pdf/10.1098/rstb.2017.0433>

5. Other important co-benefits:

The GDN will contribute to the following global conventions: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, specifically: 1,3, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14 and 15), the Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, Ramsar Convention and the CBD post-Aichi targets.

Food production is the largest driver of biodiversity loss¹¹ and environmental change¹². Protecting half the Earth has been identified as an essential target to meet projections for global food demand¹³.

6. Involved countries and organizations:

The concept of GDN, and protecting half the Earth, is being championed by a number of organizations globally. Nearly 100 organizations have joined a formal call and petition for the GDN¹⁴, with 400,000+ signatures from 92 countries (end of April 2019). Campaigns are being led by the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, Avaaz, WILD Foundation, and others in the NNH movement. However, we are just beginning to organize around next steps and how calls for a GDN might help NBCS scale up rapidly. The timing is ideal to now begin the work of how to adapt, improve, and extend the GDN proposal to support climate action.

7. Stakeholder consultations:

The proposed GDN has been discussed with 36 NNH member organizations from 12 countries, which includes local and indigenous communities. The CSA concept has received positive feedback; a focus on defining these CSAs and how they might feature NBCS will be a feature of our contribution. We would identify and select key stakeholders to discuss their ideas for how their territories, communities, or how other jurisdictional lands could be included in, and benefit from, a CSA designation under a GDN.

8. How to put contribution into action:

The GDN vision and strategy should be discussed and adopted by both UNFCCC (COP 25/26) and CBD (COP 15). Following that, required resources for implementation should be jointly identified and ensured by both conventions.

9. Delivery: Through the UNFCCC and CBD processes.

10. Contributions to other work streams:

Resilience & adaptation, Mitigation, Youth and citizen mobilization

11. Examples and experiences to date:

Examples are provided on the NNH website¹⁵.

¹¹ https://wwf.panda.org/our_work/food/

¹² <https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/EAT>

¹³ <https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/EAT>

¹⁴ <https://www.globaldealfornature.org>

¹⁵ <https://natureneedshalf.org/what-we-do/>

12. Funding mechanisms & partnerships:

It is recommended to identify joint funding arrangements between the UNFCCC and CBD. Under the UNFCCC, the Green Climate Fund¹⁶, individual governments and the corporate sector should also allocate funds for protecting globally important natural GDN “carbon repositories” and support key ecological restoration initiatives.

Using architecture of Paris Agreement and taking NNH as benchmark¹⁷, it has been recommended to work with corporate sector (Seafood, Agribusiness,, Insurance, etc.) alongside governments to design and finance the GDN as a key element of the CBD. There is a need to raise the ambition for the annual biodiversity conservation bill worldwide from currently \$4-10 billion to \$100 billion, of which the seafood and forest products sectors alone could provide \$20-30 billion.

13. Means of stewardship, metrics for monitoring:

The NNH Steering Group¹⁸ provides stewardship, supported by in-country Steering Committees comprising government, NGO and local community representatives. Potential monitoring objectives: (i) With a goal of 50% protected by 2050, global protected area targets are set to 30% by 2030 at CBD COP15, (ii) A GDN or equivalent Accord with metrics similar to those proposed in 2019 paper, is adopted by CBD, UNFCCC, with x number of signatory countries; (iii) CSAs or equivalent defined, identified, championed, funded as essential parts of global climate mitigation.

14. Communications strategy:

Main communications for GDN: One Earth¹⁹ (Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation); global petition by Avaaz²⁰ ; NNH Global network²¹ .

15. Proponents:

NNH Network,²² RESOLVE²³, WILD Foundation²⁴

Contact Vance G Martin vance@wld.org

¹⁶ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/home>

¹⁷ <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/360/6388/486.long>

¹⁸ <https://natureneedshalf.org/who-we-are/people/>

¹⁹ <https://www.oneearth.org>

²⁰ <https://www.globaldealfornature.org>

²¹ <https://natureneedshalf.org>

²² <https://natureneedshalf.org>

²³ <https://www.resolve.ngo>

²⁴ <https://www.wild.org>