Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

8th Meeting of the CMS Multi-Stakeholder Energy Task Force

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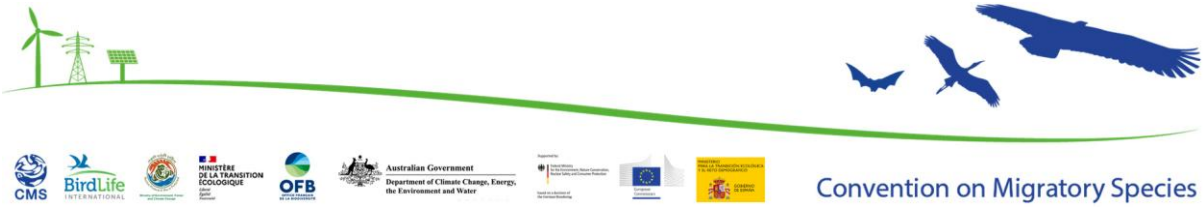
ETF8/Doc.3

PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



Proposal for Private Sector Engagement Strategy Private Sector Working Group

(Subject to approval by the ETF)

Introduction

The UN Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Energy Task Force (ETF) is a multi-stakeholder platform dedicated to reconciling energy developments with the conservation of migratory species. Convening governments, intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, and NGOs, the ETF works to ensure that renewable energy developments proactively avoid and minimize negative impacts on migratory species and their habitats.

Recognizing the critical role and growing interest of the private sector, at the ETF7 meeting, a Private Sector Working Group was established in 2024. This group aims to develop a strategic approach for engaging with renewable energy companies. The private sector, namely energy developers, manufacturers, grid operators, plant operators, and maintenance companies, is an essential partner in mitigating the biodiversity risks associated with energy infrastructure. Meaningful dialogue and collaboration are fundamental to addressing the interconnected climate and biodiversity crises that ensures the expansion of renewable energy and safeguards migratory species.

As the first in-depth private sector engagement strategy under a CMS instrument, this Strategy introduces the work and impact of the ETF and broader CMS to industry and emerging stakeholders. It was prepared the Private Sector Working Group to guide ETF's engagement with private sector stakeholders in the renewable energy sector. It builds on ETF's earlier Private Sector Engagement Strategy (ETF7/Inf.8) and provides practical criteria, engagement phases and methods to reconcile energy developments with the conservation of migratory species and ensure that renewable energy developments proactively avoid and minimize negative impacts on migratory species and their habitats. Reflecting the evolving nature of ETF's engagement, the Strategy is scheduled for review and approval by ETF members in the ETF8 meeting.

Guided by the UNEP Strategy for Private Sector Engagement, the Private Sector Engagement Strategy ('Strategy' thereafter) outlines the scope of ETF´s engagement with individual private sector companies. The Strategy also establishes criteria for identifying and prioritizing private sector entities that the ETF should actively engage with and proposes a two-phase implementation approach, including a pilot phase and an expanded engagement phase, ensuring that the engagement is targeted, impactful, and aligned with the ETF objectives.

I. Scope of private sector companies engaged

The ETF will focus on engaging with private sector stakeholders in the renewable energy sector involved in the development, deployment, and management of renewable energy resources. Among key stakeholders are wind turbine and solar manufacturers, wind and solar project developers, electricity grid operators, and renewable plant operators and maintenance companies. Partnering with these entities is vital to address the climate and biodiversity crises in an integrated way.

Engagement with other stakeholder groups, such as hydropower companies and private financial institutions, is to be explored in the future. Below is a definition of the stakeholders:

1. Wind Energy

Wind energy representatives in the private sector play a critical role in the shift to renewable energy but also have significant interactions with natural environments and migratory species. This makes engagement with these companies essential to ensure that environmental impacts are minimized. Key players include:

- **Turbine manufacturers:** These companies focus on designing, producing, and innovating wind turbines. The construction, location, and operation of turbines can disrupt local habitats and pose risks to biodiversity, particularly migratory species (e.g., birds, bats, butterflies, etc.) that may collide with the rotating blades. Collaborating with manufacturers can lead to design advancements (e.g., blade painting or sensors) that help reduce wildlife impacts.
- **Wind developers:** Developers handle the identification of sites, design, environmental assessments, permitting, and construction of onshore and offshore wind farms. Their activities can impact migratory pathways and critical habitats if not carefully managed. Engaging with developers during the site selection and planning stages is essential to mitigate risks, as these companies often have the capacity to implement mitigation measures from early stage. A close collaboration during operational phase is advisable to address properly any risks which may appear after the construction ended.
- **Operations & maintenance:** These companies are responsible for the ongoing upkeep of wind turbines, ensuring they operate efficiently. Maintenance activities can inadvertently disturb local wildlife, especially if conducted during breeding or migratory seasons. Working closely with operations teams allows for the scheduling of activities that minimize disruption to sensitive species and periods, which can help safeguard migratory patterns and local ecosystems.

Engaging with wind energy representatives is crucial because they have direct influence over where and how wind farms are developed and maintained. Such collaboration supports the integration of nature-friendly practices into their operations, promoting a balance between renewable energy production and the conservation of migratory species.

2. Grid Operators

Grid operators are responsible for the infrastructure that delivers renewable energy to consumers. As they expand and modernize grids to support renewable sources, their activities have direct ecological impacts. Key roles include:

- **Transmission system operators (TSOs)** manage high-voltage power grids, transmitting electricity from producers to distribution networks. Their infrastructure can impact nature by posing collision risks to birds, especially larger migratory species like storks and raptors. Additionally, transmission lines can fragment habitats and disrupt migratory routes. To reduce these impacts, TSOs often implement mitigation measures like bird flight diverters and strategic siting to protect biodiversity and align grid expansion with environmental conservation.
- **Distribution system operators (DSOs)** manage the medium- to low-voltage power grids that deliver electricity directly to consumers, including homes, businesses, and industries. Their infrastructure, such as poles, wires, and substations, can impact nature by creating collision and electrocution risks for birds, particularly smaller species

and migratory birds navigating urban or semi-rural areas. To mitigate these effects, DSOs may use insulated wires, install bird-safe equipment, and careful siting practices to minimize harm to wildlife and support biodiversity within distribution areas.

In certain countries, the same company is responsible for both the high-voltage transmission of electricity across long distances and the lower-voltage distribution to local consumers. Grid operators may include both national companies that manage large regional or national grids and local operators who handle specific jurisdictions.

3. Photovoltaic (PV)

PV representatives in the private sector contribute to sustainable energy by developing solar technologies, but their operations can also impact natural habitats and migratory species. This makes early and ongoing engagement important. We distinguish two categories of PV representatives:

- **PV manufacturers:** These companies develop solar panels and related components, working to increase efficiency and reduce the footprint of installations. Engaging with manufacturers can encourage them to innovate in ways that minimize the land area needed for solar installations, reducing the impact on habitats that are essential for migratory species.
- **Solar project developers:** Developers plan, finance, and build solar farms, often on large tracts of land. This might often overlap with migratory pathways or sensitive habitats. By collaborating with developers, conservationists can advocate for responsible site selection, land-use planning, and habitat conservation measures to ensure that solar farms avoid or minimize disruption to ecosystems and migratory routes.

The rapid expansion of PV highlights the importance of partnering with these representatives to implement practices that respect natural habitats and migratory routes. Engaging with PV representatives supports the growth of solar energy in ways that align with biodiversity conservation.

II. Criteria for selecting private sector companies

There has been increasing interest among ETF members in engaging with the private sector to develop and tailor guidance and resources that promote Good International Industry Practices (GIIP) and minimize potential negative impacts on migratory species. Concurrently, some private sector organizations are keen to collaborate with the ETF to access these valuable resources. Each company interested in engaging with the ETF will be assessed using a set of criteria, categorized into mandatory and secondary criteria.

Table 1 shows a list of six criteria designed to identify private sector companies that align with the ETF's work and goals. The final decision on admission is made by the ETF membership, based on recommendations from the Private Sector Working Group. It is proposed that these criteria will be reevaluated at ETF9 in 2026 to ensure they remain relevant and effective in fostering collaboration.

Table 1: Criteria for selecting private sector companies

Criteria	Type of criteria	Description	Considerations
Pathways to decarbonization	Mandatory	Evaluate the company's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and transitioning from fossil fuels.	• Goal alignment: Does the company's environmental strategy include measurable goals to phase out non-renewable activities (i.e., oil, coal, gas)? • Carbon neutrality targets: Has the company set short- or long-term targets for achieving carbon neutrality? • This criterion will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
Commitment to biodiversity protection	Mandatory	Assess whether biodiversity protection is integral to the company's strategy. Assess the commitment to implement Good International Industry Practice (GIIP).	• Policy and practice: Does the company include biodiversity conservation as part of its environmental or corporate strategy? • Legal compliance vs. proactive action: Does the company go beyond legal requirements (e.g., implementation of mitigation hierarchy, voluntary habitat restoration or species protection initiatives)? • This criterion will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
Stakeholder engagement	Mandatory	Evaluate the company's engagement with local communities, NGOs, and other stakeholders.	• Community relations: Does the company work with local communities to mitigate environmental impacts and/or enhance capacity building of those communities? • Reputation: Does the company feature positively on environmental issues publicly? • NGO partnerships: Does the company collaborate with NGOs and key stakeholders on sustainable development initiatives?
Geographical scope	Secondary	Determine whether the company's operational regions align with the ETF's	• Strategic fit: Does the company have a presence in regions where the ETF seeks strategic engagement?

Criteria	Type of criteria	Description	Considerations
		geographical priorities.	
Innovation in environmental solutions	Secondary	Assess whether the company invests in or develops innovative solutions to minimize environmental impact of their infrastructure.	• Technology investment: Is the company actively investing in R&D to reduce its environmental impacts? • Product innovation: Is the company testing new products or services that benefit the environment, such as biodiversity monitoring technologies?
Transparency and reporting	Secondary	Assess the company's transparency in reporting environmental impacts and sustainability efforts.	• Public reporting: Does the company publish regular, detailed reports on its environmental performance and sustainability goals? • International networks: Is the company part of a major UN-affiliated initiative, e.g. Global Compact and Race to Zero campaign. • Commitment: Does the company commit to minimizing the negative impacts of raw materials used in its supply chain on nature and biodiversity?

III. Engagement Phases

To effectively engage the private sector in the renewable energy sector, the ETF will implement a two-phase strategy designed to foster collaboration and promote best practices. See also section V of this document for a draft timeline.

a) Pilot Engagement Phase

The ETF will select and engage with a representative group of private sector organizations to understand their needs and interest. Together with ETF representatives, this group will review and tune in the engagement strategy that aligns with both the ETF's objectives and the private sector's interests, maximizing the efficiency of the ETF.

Approach:

- Selection of participants: ETF will carefully identify and engage with a small number of sector-leading organizations (e.g., wind and solar developers, grid operators) that have demonstrated a commitment and alignment with ETF's goals. ETF will use the criteria identified in this proposal for their selection.

- Collaborative workshops: ETF will organize one or two interactive workshops to explore mutual interests, challenges, and opportunities. These sessions will serve as a platform to co-create the tailored engagement strategy.
- Feedback and refinement: ETF will collect feedback from private sector representatives to refine the engagement strategy and ensure it addresses the needs and expectations of both the ETF and private sector representatives.

b) Expanded Engagement Phase

The ETF will broaden the scope of engagement by incorporating lessons learned from the pilot phase and engaging a wider array of private sector entities.

Approach:

- Outreach and communication: Develop targeted communication strategies to reach additional private sector organizations, highlighting the benefits and opportunities of collaboration with the ETF. Current members of the ETF will promote the task force at various international events and use this opportunity to engage with additional private sector representatives.
- Scalability and adaptation: Adapt the engagement strategy based on pilot phase outcomes, ensuring scalability and relevance across different sectors and regions. A timeframe and a strategy for engagement will be defined in the pilot phase.
- Ongoing evaluation: Implement a continuous evaluation process to monitor progress, address challenges, and adapt strategies as needed.

Expected Levels of Engagement

This strategy broadly follows UNEP's Strategy for Private Sector Engagement, as highlighted in Figure 1 below. This strategy identifies six different levels of engagement: Level 1: Information Dissemination, Level 2: Public Events, Training and Campaigns, Level 3: Open Networks and Policy Discussion, Level 4: Multi-stakeholder Fora (Networks and Platforms), Level 5: Partnerships, Alliances and Transactions.

The first four levels of engagement are expected to be fostered in the pilot phase. The ETF will be invited to review the progress and lessons learned from the first year of implementing this strategy at the 9th meeting of the ETF in 2026. They will provide guidance on future engagement, such as expanding the scope and number of private sector stakeholders involved, as well as exploring constructive partnerships and alliances, addressing the fifth engagement level outlined in the figure below.

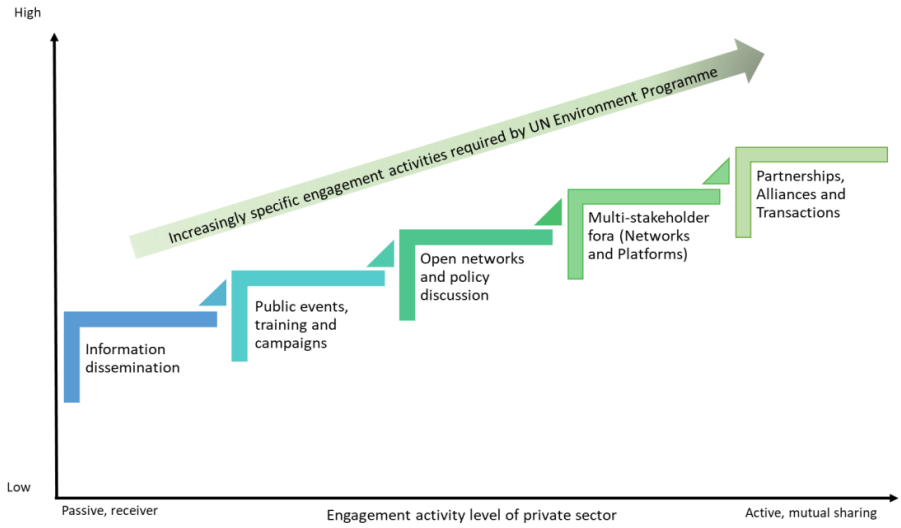


Figure 1: Levels of engagement, according to UNEP's Strategy for Private Sector Engagement

IV. Value Proposition to the Private Sector

There's a rapidly growing interest from the private sector in engaging with the ETF. The key value propositions for the private sector to engage with the ETF are:

- **Guidance and Best Practices**: Supporting private sector activities with learning opportunities, knowledge exchange, networking opportunities, and technical guidance on nature-friendly best practices, such as critical habitat assessments and IFC Performance Standard 6.

- **Reputation, Collaboration, and Access to Information:** Enhancing their reputation by engaging with the only UN multi-stakeholder task force on energy-nature nexus, building meaning partnerships with key stakeholders and contributing to the goals of CMS, Global Biodiversity Framework, Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, and thus public acceptance of their projects – and gaining access to resources that enable effective participation in industry activities.

- **Engagement with policymakers at the global level:** Providing companies opportunities to engage with government representatives and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) at a global scale, ensuring that the understand industry perspectives on renewables and nature.

V. Timeline

This proposal suggests a 4-month timeline for the pilot phase and a 7-month timeline for the expansion phase, contingent on ETF's approval and feedback.

Pilot Phase (4 months)

Key activities include:

1. **Pre-Engagement**
   - Invite participants and prepare workshop materials (e.g., surveys, goals)
   - Arrange logistics for virtual workshops

2. **Workshops**
   - Conduct two virtual workshops (2 hours each)
   - Focus on identifying challenges, opportunities, and targeted engagement strategies

3. **Updated Strategy**
   - Incorporate feedback into final strategy draft
   - Hold a virtual meeting (1 hour) for final approval and submit to ETF

Expansion Phase (7 months)

4. **Outreach**
   - Develop communication materials (e.g., templates, presentations) and launch campaign.
   - Prepare application materials

5. **Application and Selection of first cohort**
   - Selection of participants based on established criteria.
   - Host a virtual information session (1 hour) and onboard participants.

6. **Implementation**
   - Identify and execute one key action for the expansion phase (e.g., training or development of tailored short guidelines).
   - Gather feedback on implementation success.

7. **Wrap-Up and Reporting**
   - Compile report on outcomes and lessons
   - Review in ETF meeting and plan next steps.

Annex I Potential Pilot Companies

Annex I outline a list of potential private sector companies the ETF may wish to engage with, based on inputs from ETF members part of its Private Sector Working Group. Decisions on companies to invite will be made by the ETF membership.

Companies suggested for the pilot phase

Company	Headquarters	Presence	Wind/Grid/PV
Orsted	Denmark	Europe, North America, Asia	Wind and PV
Iberdrola	Spain	Europe, Latin America, North America, Pacific	Wind, PV, Hydro, and Grid
Masdar	UAE	Global	Wind, PV, and Grid
Longi	China	Global	PV
RWE	Germany	Europe, North America, Australia	Wind and PV
Kipeto	Kenya	Kenya	Wind
Taiba	Dakar	Senegal	Wind

Further examples

Company	Headquarters	Presence	Wind/Grid/PV
Octopus	UK	Europe, US, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore	Wind and PV
Vestas	Global	Global	Wind
ReNew Power	India	India	Wind, PV, Hydro
Schneider Electric	France	Global	PV and Grid
ISA	Colombia	Latin America	Grid
Infinity Power	Egypt	Africa Region	Wind, PV, and Grid
Elia	Belgium	Belgium	Grid
RTE	France	France	Grid
Amprion	Germany	Germany	Grid
National Grid	UK	UK and US	Grid
E-on	Germany	Europe	Grid
E-Redes	Portugal	Europe	Grid
Enedis	France	France	Grid
Enerjisa	Turkey	Turkey	Wind, Solar, Hydro, Grid