



LETTER OF INTENT

between

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, an international organization, with headquarters located at Rue Mauverney 28, 1196 Gland, Switzerland operating in Germany through the IUCN European Regional Office, with its offices located in Godesberger Allee 108-112, 53175 Bonn (hereafter “IUCN”),

and

Aggregates Europe, an AISBL, with its headquarters located at Square de Meeûs 40, 1000 Brussels, Belgium (hereafter “Aggregates Europe”), which represents the aggregates industry in 26 countries in Europe, aggregates being crushed stone, sand & gravel, recycled, manufactured and marine aggregates. The aggregates industry is the largest non-energy extractive industry by volume, number of locations and number of employees: the European aggregates industry has an output of 3 billion tonnes a year from 26,000 quarries and pits operated by 15,000 companies, most of which are SMEs, with 187,000 people employed,

and

Eurogypsum, an international non-profit association founded in 1961 and established under Belgian law (AISBL), with its headquarters located at Rue de la Presse 4, 1000 Brussels, Belgium. Eurogypsum is a European federation of national associations of producers of gypsum products (i.e. plaster and plasterboard). It is one of the few fully integrated industries (from cradle to cradle) within the construction products field. The companies which extract gypsum also process it and manufacture the value-added products and systems used extensively in construction and other industries. With a turnover of EUR 7 billion, the European gypsum and anhydrite industry operates 111 factories and 132 quarries and directly generates employment for 16,000 people and indirectly for 300,000 people. The gypsum industry provides jobs for 1,100,000 plasterers and plasterboard installers, and it trains around 25,000 people per year across Europe,

Herein referred to jointly and severally as the “Parties” and “Party”, as the context may reasonably indicate or require.

Preamble

Whereas the mission of IUCN is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable;

Whereas IUCN is a global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it;

Whereas the vision of Aggregates Europe is to elevate its role as a global leader in sustainable aggregate production, setting the standard for environmental stewardship, competitiveness, innovation, and community engagement in the industry;

Whereas the vision of Eurogypsum is to support the European gypsum industry's enabling role as a leader in the sustainable supply and processing of raw materials essential to produce low-carbon, lightweight construction products, enabling Europeans' access to affordable, safe, healthy, comfortable and decarbonised buildings;

Whereas both Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum aim to promote their industries as key contributors to Europe's sustainable development, through innovation, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility, while ensuring the industry's competitiveness and compliance with evolving EU policies and regulations;

Whereas the European aggregates and gypsum industries source essential raw materials in Europe, supply their products domestically and serve the local markets, actively contributing to the EU's open strategic autonomy;

Whereas the European aggregates and gypsum sectors are strongly committed to a circular economy model; whereas *the European aggregates industry, represented by Aggregates Europe, supports circularity through the production of both primary and secondary aggregates, with recycling of construction and demolition waste where economically, environmentally and technically viable and as part of its business model;* whereas gypsum is in principle an eternally recyclable raw material and Eurogypsum advocates for an increasing amount of recycled raw material to re-enter the value chain, but barriers to recycling persist and affect the reliance on primary raw material;

Whereas both Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum are members of the European Commission's Business and Biodiversity Platform, Aggregates Europe being the first industry association to join this platform in 2010, which was managed by the IUCN Regional Office for Europe;

Whereas Aggregates Europe in 2007 was one of the first industry associations to commit to IUCN's "Countdown 2010" initiative, and subsequently carried through on the associated commitments in steadfast cooperation with IUCN between then and now;

Whereas Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum have demonstrated that both operating and restored extraction sites can be areas of significant biodiversity value through several case studies and sharing of best practices, and wish to more actively encourage the fostering of biodiversity in its members' activities;

Whereas Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum have supported the adoption of an ambitious EU Nature Restoration Law with environmental NGOs which are members of IUCN and showed their continued support for quarry and nature restoration during the blockage of the legislative process;

Whereas Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum believe that sustainable access to local aggregates and gypsum resources is essential for the greater good of the European society and biodiversity, and that this access, temporary for the extraction site lifetime, should be provided within a landscape perspective of maintaining and restoring the biodiversity goods and services provided by a healthy natural environment;

Whereas the objective of Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum is to influence, encourage and assist companies (particularly the SMEs) in the aggregates and gypsum industry to

foster biodiversity in their operating and restored extraction sites in a practicable and cost-effective way;

Whereas Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum believe that offsetting of any residual biodiversity impacts after extraction can and should best be achieved through careful extraction sites restoration, rather than by any financial offsetting;

Whereas IUCN strongly believes that the need to safeguard the health of nature is a prerequisite for life on earth, and therefore all efforts should be harnessed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and maintain and restore ecosystem services, in line with the targets of the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF);

Whereas IUCN has recognised the importance of working with the private sector as one of its priority approaches globally and in Europe;

Whereas IUCN is committed to providing companies and sectors with the guidance, tools and metrics they need to move beyond 'minimising harm' to actually delivering real and measurable improvements in the state of nature to become 'Nature-Positive'.

Whereas Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum wish to deepen the aggregates industry knowledge relating to the fostering of biodiversity, species, habitats and ecosystems, as well as to promote the greater exchange of best practices within its own membership;

Whereas Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum voluntarily signed a [Code of Conduct for Species Protection](#) providing a manageable approach for planning and permitting procedures respecting EU legislation and biodiversity;

Whereas Aggregates Europe members have shown strong commitment to biodiversity with projects such as Life in Quarries (BE), GrensMaas (NL), Biodiversitätsdatenbank (DE), measuring the biodiversity in all quarries (CY) since the previous Letter of Intent signed with IUCN in 2012 in Limassol, Cyprus;

Whereas Aggregates Europe committed itself in its [2030 Roadmap](#) to develop biodiversity indicators which are meaningful, yet feasible and affordable for the many SMEs to measure progress;

Whereas Eurogypsum has been coordinating regular awareness raising actions among industry operators, such as the collection and sharing of best practices including "[Biodiversity Stewardship in Gypsum Quarrying: Our Best Practices](#)", the design and display of posters in quarries, in the respective national languages, to sensitise gypsum quarry managers and workers about the positive impact of simple actions to support biodiversity and ecosystems in operated quarries, or the organisation of a photography contest relating to biodiversity among quarry operators;

Whereas Eurogypsum and its members cooperate with non-governmental organisations and the scientific community on research of common interest, such as disturbance ecology in the quarries;

Whereas the Parties recognise the benefits that each may derive from their collaboration hereunder toward the fulfilment of their respective missions;

To that end, IUCN, Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum now wish to sign a **Letter of Intent** to continue the good relationship that has existed between the Parties and to seek to further develop and extend that relationship into a partnership over the next three years with the purpose of identifying opportunities for collaboration, such as those listed in Annex 1 attached, towards enhanced fostering of biodiversity and ecosystems in the aggregates and gypsum industry operations, with a particular focus on encouraging the commitment of the many Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the industry.

To that end, representatives of the three parties will meet officially twice a year to identify such opportunities and possible projects that might then be agreed on a European, national or regional basis between the Parties or between their respective members at national or regional level. Such projects could then become the subject/s of a Memorandum of Understanding between the relevant parties.

In witness whereof, the undersigned, being duly authorised to do so, have executed this Letter of Intent in the English language in three (3) counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, and which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

Aggregates EuropeSigned: _____


Antonis Antoniou Latouros
President

EurogypsumSigned: _____


Christoph Dorn
President

IUCN European Regional OfficeSigned _____


Boris Erg
Director

Signed on 5 June 2025, Krakow, Poland

Annex 1

Possible areas and activities of collaboration

1. This Letter of Intent is intended to provide the Parties with a general framework and a guiding tool in identifying and carrying out specific collaborative projects and activities. Specific areas of collaboration, activities and projects will be identified on the basis of geographic, programmatic and/or other relevant criteria and may then become the subject/s of a Memorandum of Understanding, including the human and financial resources needed to implement them.
2. Potential areas of collaboration may include, but are not limited to, the following:

2.1 Promoting nature conservation in the Aggregates and Gypsum industry

- IUCN, Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum will jointly develop a cost-efficient communications campaign through their respective communication channels that will address the biodiversity and nature restoration challenges for the aggregate and gypsum industries and highlight the positive role that the aggregate and gypsum industries in Europe can play and are playing in fostering biodiversity and nature restoration at the site level.
- Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum will spread the messages that will jointly be developed by IUCN, Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum to the aggregates and gypsum industries around the world, in particular through the Global Aggregates Information Network (GAIN) and Global Gypsum events, and IUCN will do the same through its regional and global networks;
- IUCN, Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum will seek to work towards the promotion of green infrastructure in Europe; specific projects to potentially develop connectivity between different extraction and protection sites may be developed by Aggregates Europe and/or Eurogypsum members in partnership with IUCN National Committees, Members and experts in relevant EU Member States;
- Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum will have appropriate opportunities to present results or share information during relevant IUCN events.

2.2 Sharing biodiversity knowledge and nature positive approaches

- Aggregates Europe will invite a senior IUCN representative to be one of the independent jury members in its Sustainable Development Awards 2025;
- Eurogypsum will invite a senior IUCN representative to be one of the independent jury members in its Biodiversity photo contest;
- Aggregates Europe will invite a representative from IUCN to its Biodiversity Task Force as an observer during the next three years, 2025-2027.
- Eurogypsum will invite a representative from IUCN to its Quarry Working Group as an observer during the next three years, 2025-2027.
- Aggregates Europe, Eurogypsum and IUCN will seek to create a mechanism to allow IUCN biodiversity expertise and knowledge related to nature positive approaches, tools and metrics, such as the Species

Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR) metric, to be available to Aggregates Europe, Eurogypsum and their respective national members;

- Aggregates Europe, Eurogypsum and IUCN will seek to promote the exchange of knowledge between IUCN experts and industry operators, helping both to refine their ongoing strategies on biodiversity;
- Aggregates Europe, Eurogypsum and IUCN will help share their links with NGOs and other stakeholders at national and local level as and when appropriate;
- Aggregates Europe will continue to develop and expand its database of Biodiversity Case Studies, currently comprising more than 200 case studies; some or all of these may be reviewed by IUCN experts in due course under a Supplemental Agreement; Aggregates Europe will have its biodiversity case studies available on its website.
- Aggregates Europe will seek to engage with its members that have not yet provided any biodiversity case studies;
- Eurogypsum will continue to integrate its database of best practices in the “Biodiversity Stewardship in Gypsum Quarrying: Our Best Practices”; some or all of these may be reviewed by IUCN experts in due course under a supplemental agreement;
- Eurogypsum will continue to engage with all members on this subject, to disseminate best practices and stimulate case studies from members that have not yet provided any to the Eurogypsum online database;
- IUCN will refer to the respective Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum website sections dedicated to biodiversity in the most appropriate form.

2.3 Strengthening biodiversity-enhancing business practices for nature positive outcomes

- Aggregates Europe, Eurogypsum and IUCN will work towards developing a coherent biodiversity reference base for the European aggregates and gypsum industries, using existing Aggregates Europe case studies and documents and other relevant information;
- Aggregates Europe, Eurogypsum and IUCN will aim to develop simple and pragmatic biodiversity guidelines suitable for all operators and in particular SMEs in the aggregates and gypsum industry;
- IUCN, Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum will aim to promote the application of the European Commission’s Natura 2000 Guidelines for the Extractive Industry;
- IUCN, Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum will promote the role of aggregates and gypsum industries in the development of national nature restoration plans as part of the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Law;
- Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum will encourage their members to follow recommendations, guidelines and requirements to enhance biodiversity in and around their extraction sites and enable IUCN experts to provide advice where requested or required.

2.4 Better biodiversity reporting

- Aggregates Europe, Eurogypsum and IUCN will cooperate in developing biodiversity status and monitoring indicators and tools for the aggregates and gypsum industries, bearing in mind that these must

- be simple and cost-effective to be implementable by SMEs as well as large companies;
- Aggregates Europe and Eurogypsum, with the support of IUCN, will encourage their members that companies should voluntarily endeavour to:
 - Review their operating and restored locations for their biodiversity potential;
 - Develop biodiversity action plans for those locations in biodiversity-sensitive areas;
 - Make publicly available biodiversity data for those sensitive locations, where and when agreed by operator and the local stakeholders involved.
 - Aggregates Europe, Eurogypsum and IUCN will work towards developing a methodology for putting an economic (as opposed to financial) value on ecosystem services in the context of the aggregates and gypsum industries.