



biodiversa+
European Biodiversity Partnership

EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP

Report on the Strategic Workshop on Business & Biodiversity



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What is Biodiversa+

Biodiversa+ is the new European co-funded biodiversity partnership supporting excellent research on biodiversity with an impact for policy and society. It was jointly developed by BiodivERsA and the European Commission (DG Research & Innovation and DG Environment) and was officially launched on 1 October 2021.

Biodiversa+ is part of the European Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 that aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030.

The Partnership aims to connect science, policy and practice for transformative change. It currently gathers more than 80 research programmers and funders and environmental policy actors from 40 European and associated countries to work on 5 main objectives:

1. Plan and support research and innovation on biodiversity through a shared strategy, annual joint calls for research projects and capacity building activities
2. Set up a network of harmonised schemes to improve monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services across Europe
3. Contribute to high-end knowledge for deploying Nature-based Solutions and valuation of biodiversity in the private sector
4. Ensure efficient science-based support for policy-making and implementation in Europe
5. Strengthen the relevance and impact of pan-European research on biodiversity in a global context

More information at: <https://www.biodiversa.org/>

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Acronyms

| | |
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| CBD | Convention on Biological Dive |
| CDC | Caisse des dépôts |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| COP | Conference of Parties |
| CSA | Coordination and Support Action |
| CSDR | Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive |
| ESRS | European Sustainability Reporting Standards |
| EU | European Union |
| FRB | French Foundation for Research on Biodiversity |
| GBF | Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework |
| GBS | Global Biodiversity Score |
| IBAT | Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool |
| IENE | Infrastructure Ecology Network Europe |
| IPBES | Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| KBA | Key Biodiversity Area |
| MSA | Medium Species Abundance |
| NBSAPs | National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans |
| PhD | Philosophical Doctor (degree) |
| SBTN | Science based Target Network |
| SBSTTA | Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice |
| SRIA | Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda |
| TFND | Task Force for Nature Related Financial Disclosure |
| USD | United States Dollars |

Executive Summary

Biodiversa+ organised a workshop on how can businesses participate in European research and innovation for the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity. The objectives of the workshop were to (i) learn and share experiences about global and European policies and frameworks and to (ii) identify knowledge needs, challenges and opportunities for businesses to feed research and innovation programming and related activities undertaken in relation to biodiversity and in the context of the European Biodiversity Partnership (Biodiversa+).

The workshop allowed a better understanding of the research and innovation needs for businesses to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and European biodiversity policies and identified potential gaps, needs and opportunities. These were classified into two categories: 1) one about rising awareness on nature and biodiversity loss/education and consumer awareness and 2) the other on the development of tools. This report proposes several avenues to address those needs including the development of activities to better communicate complex issues to businesses, create space and opportunities for stakeholders to share knowledge and tools, develop and enhance existing tools for businesses to build a clearer road map to know where to start, in which direction, what are the resources needed and where to get the support in terms of capacities and experience, and to undertake research to harmonize and improve tools and metrics for better consistency and development towards a common understanding of baselines to assess biodiversity impacts, etc.

Biodiversa+ support research and innovation by launching calls and may engage with the private sector on topics identified during the workshop. Continuing to organize workshops to promote exchange between researchers and private sector representatives and communicate the results of relevant funded projects are also important to contribute to the effective and long-term collaboration between business and biodiversity stakeholders.

1. Organization of the workshop

The strategic workshop “Business4Biodiversity” was organized by the French Foundation for Research on Biodiversity (FRB). The workshop was held on one day, the 28th of June from 09:00 to 18:00 at the Caisse des Depots, with the support of CDC Biodiversité.

1.1. Objectives of the workshop

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- learn and share experiences about global and European policy frameworks,
- identify knowledge needs, challenges and opportunities for businesses on biodiversity to feed research and innovation programming and related activities undertaken in the context of the European Biodiversity Partnership.

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To meet these objectives, the workshop was built around three questions:

- What are the implications of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and European biodiversity policies for businesses and their reporting?
- What knowledge and support do businesses need to implement the GBF and European biodiversity policies?
- How can businesses participate in European research and innovation for the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity?

1.2. Participants

Were invited to the workshop members from Biodiversa+ Enlarged Stakeholder Boards, Biodiversa+ partners, as well as from European organisations related to business and biodiversity were further identified. In total, 40 people attended the workshop.

The participants were a good representation of 28 different organisations including research organisations, businesses, biodiversity-related organisations and other stakeholders. There were 9 countries represented with more than half of the participants from France which is explained by the fact that the meeting was in Paris (more accessible for people on site), the meeting was organised by a French organisation (the FRB) and because Biodiversa+ operational team is also base in France.

1.3. Agenda

The workshop included presentations, collaborative sessions and panel discussions to allow participants to interact and share experiences. The full agenda is available in Annex I.

2. Report of the workshop

2.1. Welcoming words

Hilde Eggermont, Chair of Biodiversa+ started the day by reminding the participants of the crucial time we were in with the adoption of the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#). The framework creates many opportunities for the private sector to engage with the biodiversity agenda and Biodiversa+ is looking to help support the private sector in this regard. In order to help, the partnership needs to know what is needed and this workshop was the opportunity to identify those needs and highlight a some existing initiatives. She pointed out how useful it was for Biodiversa+ to hear the participant's views to work on a strategy to reinforce the engagement with the private sector, to provide better knowledge, data, and shape the partnership's activities related to capacity building and the science-policy interface.

Clémence Bourcet, representing the host of the meeting, stressed the contribution of the CDC Biodiversité to the deployment of actionable knowledge to increase the relevance, impact and visibility of European research. CDC Biodiversité is a well-established institution, involved in the implementation of national objectives related to climate change and biodiversity and making significant contributions to biodiversity footprint assessment and the Nature 2050 programme.

2.2. Business and Biodiversity from Global to European Scale

2.2.1. Overview of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its GBF in relation to the private sector

The presentation, given by H  l  ne Soubelet, director of the French Foundation for Biodiversity Research, highlighted the targets of the GBF in relation to the private sector.

The main messages approved during the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) COP15 were to:

- Reduce threats to biodiversity,
- Meet people’s needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing,
- Have tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming.

H  l  ne Soubelet highlighted specific targets, including Target 15, a dedicated target for the private sector (Figure 1). Target 14 is also of importance for the private sector as it specifies that governments should “Ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes, [...] within and across all levels of government and across all sectors, in particular those with significant impacts on biodiversity, progressively aligning all relevant public and private activities, fiscal and financial flows with the goals and targets of this framework.” Activities having a significant impacts on biodiversity transpires from the [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) (IPBES) Global Assessment who identified five major drivers of biodiversity loss: land use change, direct exploitation of natural resources, climate change, pollution and invasive alien species¹.



Dedicated target for business sector : monitor, assess and report / reduce impacts on biodiversity / inform consumers



TARGET 15

Take legal, administrative or policy measures to encourage and **enable business, and in particular to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions:**

- Regularly monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity**, including with requirements for all large as well as transnational companies and financial institutions along their operations, supply and value chains and portfolios;
- Provide information needed to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns;**
- Report on compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations and measures, as applicable; in order to progressively reduce negative impacts on biodiversity, increase positive impacts**, reduce biodiversity-related risks to business and financial institutions, and promote actions to ensure sustainable patterns of production.



Figure 1. GBF Target 15 (all slides are available in Annex II)

¹ IPBES. (2019). Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (Version 1). Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673>

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Target 18 which specifies to “Identify by 2025, and eliminate, phase out or reform incentives, including subsidies harmful for biodiversity” also targets companies which should reduce their negative impacts on biodiversity. This can lead to two risks for business: i) a transitional risk: businesses have to change the way they work as governments make policies, technologies and market changes, and ii) a reputational risk as consumers, employees, etc. will change their preferences.

The targets of the GBF address the drivers identified by the IPBES Global Assessment and will impact the private sector, among other in sectors comprising agriculture, chemicals and fisheries. Agriculture, for example, is causing biodiversity loss and will be difficult to tackle: it causes land use change, directly exploit natural resources, industrial agriculture has a large contribution to pollution, etc. Target 10 is related to those sectors and urges for “a substantial increase of the application of biodiversity-friendly practices, such as sustainable intensification, agro-ecological and other innovative approaches, contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of these production systems and to food security, conserving and restoring biodiversity and maintaining nature’s contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services”. Agro-ecology was identified as an alternative as it could use fewer chemicals, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, halt the introduction of invasive species and not cause more land use change or overexploitation of biomass (due to no tilling and crop residues left in the ground).

Consumer choices are also important for business as pointed out by Target 16 which aims at by 2030 to “reduce the global footprint of consumption in an equitable manner, halve global food waste, significantly reduce overconsumption and substantially reduce waste generation, in order for all people to live well in harmony with Mother Earth.”

Targets 1, 2, 3 and 4 require that all activities must be aligned to i) stop the loss of ecosystems with high ecological integrity, ii) restore degraded ecosystems, iii) protect 30% of the ecosystems on the planet and iv) halt human-induced extinctions. The question for businesses is whether they want to “just” align with them or be actively involved. H el ene Soubelet finished her presentation by presenting Target 19 on



TARGET 19

Substantially and progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources, in an effective, timely and easily accessible manner, including domestic, international, public and private resources, [...] by 2030 mobilizing at least 200 billion United States dollars per year, including by:

[...]

(b) Significantly increasing domestic resource mobilization, facilitated by the preparation and implementation of national biodiversity finance plans or similar instruments according to national needs, priorities and circumstances

(c) Leveraging private finance, promoting blended finance, implementing strategies for raising new and additional resources, and encouraging the private sector to invest in biodiversity, including through impact funds and other instruments;

(d) Stimulating innovative schemes such as payment for ecosystem services, green bonds, biodiversity offsets and credits, benefit-sharing mechanisms, with environmental and social safeguards

(e) Optimizing co-benefits and synergies of finance targeting the biodiversity and climate crises,

[...]



Figure 2. GBF Target 19 (all slides are available in Annex II)

financing which highlights how the GBF can work (Figure 2) and pointed out that the mobilization of 200 billion \$USD is not only a matter for governments but also for businesses.

Finally, as pointed out in Target 21, we must find a way to ensure that the best available data, information and knowledge are accessible to decision-makers, practitioners and the public to guide effective and equitable governance. It is crucial that science is the basis of each decision.

The FRB identifies Nature-based solutions, involving also technological innovations, as the best practices to prevent biodiversity loss and support human needs. Moreover, certifications are also important to support initiatives from the economic and financial world.

Questions and answers

“In context of the discussion that we have today in terms of the target audience, what proportion of businesses in Europe do you think are ready to go at this level and talk about the targets? Are we talking about a small minority? Are we talking about a growing number? In terms of research and innovation on biodiversity, are we missing a gap in terms of really getting the large majority of companies that might still be quite far away from this type of framework talk and targets? Or are we really talking about maybe the 100, 200 companies that have been involved in business and biodiversity since the beginning?”

- It's a key question for which we don't have a clear answer. I think we don't have the answer. There are many partners with the FRB (Conseil d'orientation stratégique) or Biodiversa+ (Enlarged Stakeholder Board) who are aware of biodiversity loss and willing to do something but the question is how to engage the others.
- For example, we know that some sectors are more willing than others. The financial sector is ready and perhaps this will be the key point to start from and to move from “not informed” or “informed but not willing to do something” towards “informed and willing to do something” because the finance will not follow their activities.
- For example, those undertaking intensive agriculture are not always ready to step aside from business as usual. This is a problem and probably why it is also important that states to protect biodiversity and to enforce legal framework policies and regulation and to force business to undertake the transition.
- Companies will need to face some reporting and obligatory disclosure, even the smaller ones. There should be more communication and collaborative work between scientists and business companies.

“I think maybe 0.1 % of the companies can talk at this level about the issue. But we should not forget that there is a whole legislative framework coming up, especially in terms of obligatory disclosure of biodiversity performance. The European CSR Directive, Corporate Sustainable Reporting Directive, will be in place quite soon and will be obligatory for about 50,000 European based companies. There's also a technical biodiversity standard in it which obliges these companies to report on impacts, dependencies, risks and opportunities. So all these companies will face difficulties in finding the right data and so on. So it's not only for the front runner companies that we have to think about today, but also for the large majority of the companies who will face these reporting obligations and so on.

- That's right. It's at the point where regulation can do something. But to highlight regulation risk, we must go far away from just talking about a few batches of companies. It's due for all sectors and all companies, even the smaller ones. We should go beyond that and try to convince, perhaps with more information, perhaps in a way that we can put together scientists and companies and to communicate about the risk.

2.2.2. IPBES Assessment on Business and Biodiversity

Clément Féger, Senior Lecturer at AgroParisTech, researcher at the University of Montpellier and scientific co-director of the Ecological Accounting Chair is an author of the ongoing [IPBES assessment on business and biodiversity](#) to be launched in 2025 and introduced its scope (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Clément Féger. Business 4 Biodiversity on June 28th 2023

There is a growing dynamic on the business and biodiversity front with the:

- GBF that identifies businesses as key actors of change (Target 15) and underlies the importance of disclosing impacts and dependencies on biodiversity,
- European regulatory frameworks with the [European Sustainability Reporting Standards](#) (ESRS) on business reporting requiring businesses to disclose their biodiversity impact and dependencies, science based objectives and action plan,
- Multiplication of voluntary methods and tools to guide businesses in their assessments, target setting, reporting.

Clément Féger pointed out the need for a shared knowledge base on concepts and methods to turn this dynamic into concrete action across sectors and countries. This is a task that IPBES member countries

has identified as a priority. IPBES is an independent intergovernmental body established by States to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development. Created in 2012, it has 141 members in August 2023.

The Business and Biodiversity Assessment Report was decided at the 7th Plenary in 2019 by the members who identified the need to:

- Strengthen the knowledge base for businesses to contribute to the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity,
- Categorize how businesses depend and impact biodiversity and ecosystem services,
- Identify relevant indicators and metrics for measuring that dependence and impact,
- Integrate these metrics into methods and approaches to foster action and transformation.

In 2021 and 2022, a scoping report was established by 40 international experts to produce a chapter outline. The [scoping report](#) was then approved by IPBES member countries and the assessment will run from 2023 to 2025, with a new team of experts (who are going through a selective process via the IPBES multi-disciplinary experts panel), to be approved during the 12th plenary.

The expected chapter outline will be as follow:

- Chapter 1. Setting the scene
 - Purpose and intended audience
 - Issues addressed in the chapters and links with GBF and IPBES [conceptual framework](#)
 - Definition of business and typology of business sectors
- Chapter 2. How does business depend on biodiversity?
 - Describe and compare existing methods to assess dependencies
 - Provide typology of business dependencies on nature (different types and sizes)
- Chapter 3. How does business impact biodiversity?
 - Describe and compare existing methods to assess negative or positive impacts
 - Provide typology of business dependencies on nature (different types and sizes) based on the existing identification of existing methods
 - How impact links with dependencies, risks, opportunities and intersects with local communities
 - Pathways to impact for different business sectors
- Chapter 4. Approaches for measurement of business dependencies and impacts on biodiversity
 - Identify and compare frameworks, metrics, models, data, tools to measure impacts and dependencies
 - Assess their scientific robustness, identify gaps, and propose a typology
 - Provide application examples and discuss challenges (costs, data, etc.)

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- Show how it maps against IPBES conceptual framework
- Chapter 5. Businesses as key actors of change: options for action by business
 - Address the role and responsibility of business in transformative change (motivations, challenges, opportunities in taking action in different sectors)
 - How measurement approaches can be integrated into decision making, strategy, planning, reporting and deliver on commitments
 - Explore the role of collaborations with other industries, indigenous /local communities, etc. in creating change
- Chapter 6. Creating an enabling environment for business: options for actions by Governments, the financial sector and Civil society
 - How other stakeholders can use measures of impacts and dependencies to establish an enabling environment for business, take action and be accountable?
 - How other stakeholders can use measures of impacts and dependencies to raise awareness, design policies, better direct investments, shape policies, alert on risks, etc.

It is important to point out that in the assessment:

- The important differences between sectors / large and small businesses on how they depend on and impact biodiversity will be taken into account,
- Some financial institutions will be regarded as businesses from a specific sector,
- Different types of knowledge will be taken into account (scientific, grey literature, indigenous and local knowledge) and from diverse disciplines (natural sciences, business, accounting, policy, etc.),
- It will be recognizing that no one size fits all approach, metric or tool,
- Challenges of cumulated and joint impacts and dependencies will be addressed,
- There will be details on how to use measurement methods to act for transformative change from a business point of view but also from/with other stakeholders at the landscape scale.

In conclusion, this new IPBES assessment report will be the opportunity to have a new knowledge base, integrating views from different stakeholders, to recognize the specificity and complexity of the biodiversity issue in relation to businesses.

Questions and answers

“Is there any space to add any valuation to the measurement? It is the first step where companies have to do something and usually they do not really know what to do, but they would need some valuation to put measurement into context and into decision making. By valuation, I mean measure your impact and dependencies, but also begin to value, assign value to them. And value is relative intrinsic, but you can express it as qualitative, quantitative, or monetary.”

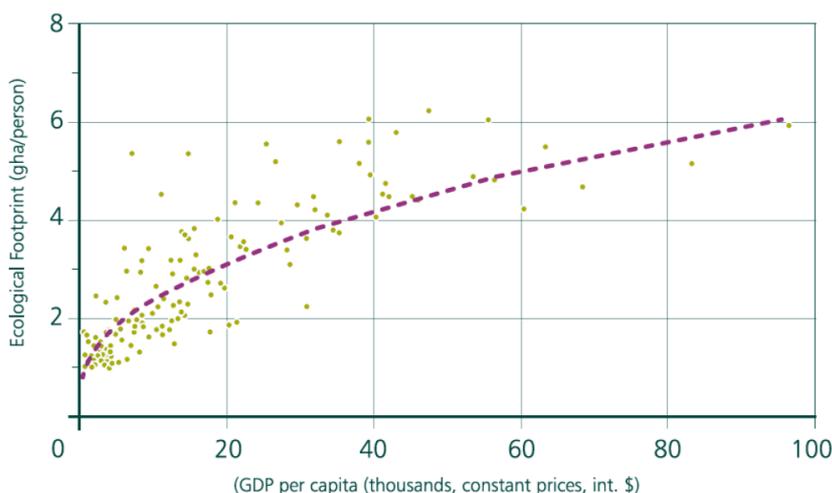
- There will be a large scope for that because the question of valuation or what you do with the metrics when you try to integrate them, for instance, in the accounting frameworks of the businesses is a very important way to make knowledgeable action about these new businesses.

I think there is also an important need to recognize the important things and controversies that there are about different types of valuations, different types of accounting, different concepts and theories behind these accounting systems that can lead to very different consequences of how we frame nature. Some frame it as an asset that produces value for businesses, some actually conceptualize it as a debt that businesses need to be accountable for. And this is why it is also a scientific assessment. There is a need to see behind the metrics and to actually go back to the theories that frame how you measure it, why you measure it, and how it becomes actionable.

2.2.3. Needs and opportunities in the European business and biodiversity landscape

Lars Dinesen, co-leader of Biodiversa+ work package 3 on supporting the design and implementation of Nature-based solutions and valuing biodiversity in the private sector presented the mapping on business and biodiversity was the next presenter.

We know that we are losing biodiversity at an alarming rate and still we have been failing as a global community to reach the Aichi targets and businesses activities have been identified as part of the problem and therefore also part of the solution (Figure 4). The 80s and 90s saw an increase of environmental protection but also economic development and the IPBES Global Assessment made it clear that “a key component of sustainable pathways is the evolution of global financial and economic systems to build a global sustainable economy, steering away from the current, limited paradigm of economic growth.”



Source: World Bank (2020a), Global Footprint Network (2019), and Review calculations.

Dasgupta Review 2021



**Biodiversity loss is not decoupled from economic growth
(IPBES 2019, Dasgupta 2021)**

Figure 4. Global footprint (all slides are available in Annex II)

The IPBES Assessment Report on the diverse values and valuation of nature² identifies key leverages points that can help catalyse transformation towards sustainable future:

2 IPBES (2022). Summary for Policymakers of the Methodological Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Pascual, U., Balvanera, P., Christie, M., Baptiste,

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- Mobilise sustainability aligned values and shift development paradigm,
- Institutions embrace the diverse values of nature,
- Meaningfully include the diverse values of nature in decision-making,
- Recognize the values of nature.

It will be interesting to see how governments, who approved the assessment at the 9th Plenary of IPBES will apply this report.

Lars Dinesen pointed out that Biodiversa+ is developing a mapping report on the business and biodiversity landscape relevant for research and innovation³ which is a challenging exercise as things are developing very fast. Businesses are dependent on biodiversity and conservation of biodiversity and natural resources has potential direct economic benefits. For example, conserving marine stocks could increase annual profits of the seafood industry by more than 49 billion euros and [Nature Fitness Check](#) showed that the benefits of Natura 2000 are valued at between 200 and 300 billion euros per year.

The mapping report will be presented as follow:

- Policy Framework
 - Overview of the GBF and other global agreements.
 - Overview of few European Union (EU) policy frameworks: [EU Taxonomy](#), [EU Nature Restoration Law](#), [EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive](#) (CSRD), [EU Deforestation regulation](#),.
- Key partners and initiatives
 - [EU Business @ Biodiversity Platform](#): a forum for dialogue and policy interface to discuss links between business and biodiversity, with more than 400 member institutions
 - [Task Force for Nature Related Financial Disclosure](#) (TFND)
 - [Science based Target Network](#) (SBTN)
 - Alliances: [Business for Nature](#). Eva Zabey, CEO of the Business for Nature coalition about the Nature Restoration Law: “Businesses and investors need clarity and a regulatory framework that encourages, incentivizes and rewards positive actions on nature. “. Business for Nature is also involved in the update of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)⁴
 - Alliances: [Finance for biodiversity](#)

B., González-Jiménez, D., Anderson, C.B., Athayde, S., Barton, D.N., Chaplin-Kramer, R., Jacobs, S., Kelemen, E., Kumar, R., Lazos, E., Martin, A., Mwampamba, T.H., Nakangu, B., O'Farrell, P., Raymond, C.M., Subramanian, S.M., Termansen, M., Van Noordwijk, M., and Vatn, A. (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6522392>

³ Mapping the business and biodiversity landscape on Research and Innovation. In progress.

⁴ NBSAPs are documents prepared by CBD parties according to Article 6 of the Convention on General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use states that asks for each Contracting Party to:

(a) Develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes which shall reflect, inter alia, the measures set out in this Convention relevant to the Contracting Party concerned.

(b) Integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.

- Identification of research gaps and preliminary options identified for research and innovation
 - How can frameworks be set up that align businesses with GBF?
 - More knowledge about whether new EU regulations that are put into effect will effectively contribute to achieving the goals and targets to safeguard and rebuild biodiversity
 - More knowledge of society's dependencies on biodiversity
 - More knowledge on higher business level impacts
 - Monitoring systems with clear and meaningful indicators needs to be developed for businesses to assess trends in their impact (NBSAPs)
 - Knowledge on the application of genetic diversity metrics and tools for measuring business impacts
 - Knowledge on the location of activities is crucial in determining the impact on biodiversity. Geographic information is lacking (for example with cotton, it is very difficult to track where it comes from)
 - Pilot projects to demonstrate implementation and achievement in a complex field with different sectors and different approaches and methods twinning projects between private sector businesses and research institutions
 - Development of standard baselines to assess biodiversity impacts
- Opportunities for Biodiversa+
 - Closer collaboration with the EU Business@Biodiversity Platform (key collaborator)
 - Identifying modalities and funding resources to facilitate the private sector engagement in Biodiversa + research and calls
 - Twinning arrangement, dissemination and capacity building
 - Support the development of monitoring systems for the private sector financial flows (related to NBSAPs)
 - Continuous mapping of the Business and Biodiversity landscape with an aim to identify and tackle research and innovation gaps and needs

Questions and answers

“It is difficult to think about the changes in business practices without addressing two points: international trade and the business model. For example, there is no way that some companies that are today producing major pollutants will ever have a positive impact on biodiversity and their whole activity will need to change. This is a gap in knowledge that should be identified.”

- Reports such as the one made by IPBES will hopefully help to find solutions for reluctant companies to meet the change.

- There are companies stuck in their business models that don't care about nature and that just started to be concerned about climate change. They will need help from the different initiatives identified.

“How likely do you see the efforts regarding regulation are effective? Do we have a backup to change the course?”

- Parties have agreed on new targets but failed to achieve the last. They should learn from experience and have more milestones, monitoring, etc. to report on a regular basis. The EU Nature Restoration Law⁵ will set a clear legally-binding target.

2.3. Collaborative session – Challenges and opportunities for businesses

The objective of the collaborative session was to identify the challenges and opportunities to implement the GBF and European biodiversity policies. Participants were first asked to work individually to identify both challenges and opportunities and then in groups before presenting a maximum of three challenges and three opportunities, identified as the most important in their regards, to the rest of the workshop's participants (Table 1, Figure 5). Overall the participants found the exercise quite difficult as an opportunity could also be identified as a challenge (e.g., the increase of research on the topic can be an opportunity but also a challenge if it is too confusing).

Table 1. Results from the first collaborative session

| Group | Opportunities | Challenges |
|-------|--|---|
| Blue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A good amount of existing literature, guidelines and knowledge brokers, to translate the complexity of the subject into approachable ways to decision-makers and business ● Existing networks to share experience ● Global commitment and public funding to guide and set the ambitions to be achieved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall confusion related to tools and methodologies and which ones are the most relevant for a specific business ● Difficulty to know where and how to get started ● Resistance to change |
| Green | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of regulatory and legislative frameworks ● Growing concern about biodiversity ● Increase of research on the topic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of training and awareness for business ● Lack of trust between researchers and business (reluctance from researchers to enter the business forum and on the other hand, businesses don't think researchers can understand and address their concerns) ● Consumer and public demand |

⁵ European Commission adopted the proposal for a Nature Restoration Law on 22nd June 2022 and voted by the European Parliament on 12th July 2023. The Law aims to restore ecosystems, habitats and species across the EU's land and sea areas in order to i) enable the long-term and sustained recovery of biodiverse and resilient nature, ii) contribute to achieving the EU's climate mitigation and climate adaptation objectives and iii) meet international commitments. It will place recovery measures on 20% of the EU's land and sea by 2030, rising to cover all degraded ecosystems by 2050.

| | | |
|--------|--|---|
| Yellow | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ecological accounting is a way to make indicators actionable for businesses over the long-term processes and to change their governance business models ● Education, linked with marketing, publicity, communication. Companies have a big leverage on that point. ● Pioneers and front-runners to experiment new types of production methods and show that is possible to have business models working and that are positive for biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Difficulty for businesses to be able to choose which framework, indicators or tools will fit best ● Too much focus on climate change: some decisions taken to consider the climate might be detrimental for biodiversity ● Most companies seek short term profit. The current governance structure of most companies doesn't allow them to take risks and initiatives that are needed. Changing the core governance (change top management and all business departments) needs to be considered as an opportunity instead of a challenge. |
| Pink | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consumer awareness calling for less impactful products ● Better reporting of nature will bring better access to capital ● Awareness about biodiversity in general as it directly concerns in some cases the sustainability and resilience of the companies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Metrics and methods are cumbersome to many companies: expensive and too diverse ● Lack of time to halt the loss of biodiversity ● Lack of human and financial resources to bring expertise over the long term. Not all companies can afford it. |
| Red | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Growing number of tools ● Growing awareness leading the demand from the public ● Possible synergy with climate issues that bring more awareness today | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of awareness about the GBF ● Difficulty to know where and how to get started ● Lack of clear legislation: how to know what is mandatory and what is optional? |
| Orange | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actions towards biodiversity have local benefits: businesses are aware that activities favouring biodiversity are good for the people ● Environmental certifications ● Businesses have a better reputation when taking account biodiversity: this is lever to make them change/improve their activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Competition between countries and firms ● Biodiversity and climate cannot be put together as climate is at the global level and biodiversity more local ● Harmful subsidies to phase out or reform |



Figure 5. Participant from the group Blue presenting their findings

All of the points identified by the groups were written under themes (Table 2) and participants were asked to vote for 3 themes they would like to investigate further. The items in bold in Table 2 were the items discussed in the second half of the collaborative session.

Table 2. Themes of opportunities and challenges identified in the first half of the collaborative session

| Opportunities (winds) themes | Challenges (anchors) themes |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ecological accounting ● Consumer awareness and education ● Rising awareness on nature and biodiversity loss ● Local benefits to people ● Driver for job creation ● Existing knowledge and guidelines, communities of practice ● Research and Innovation ● Value settings ● Linkage across business scale and functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complexity of the issue and associated language: where to get started ● Lack of capacity and resources (expertise, financial) to implement tools and targets ● Too much focus on climate issues ● Complexity of business landscape ● Diversity of metrics and methods ● Evolving landscape (which tools? Which targets?) ● Lack of trust between researchers and businesses ● Business governance ● Lack of public mobilisation |

In the second half of the collaborative session, participants were separated into two groups and had to work, like during the first half, first individually and then in subgroups to identify how can research and innovation help address/reach those challenges and opportunities. They focused on the challenges and

opportunities with the most votes from the first half of the session (Table 2, Figure 6). They all met in plenary to present their suggestions finding to the rest of the participants (Table 3).



Figure 6. Participants discussing how research and innovation could help to reach the opportunities identified in the first half of the collaborative session

Table 3. Possible avenues for research and innovation to help address the challenges and opportunities to implement the GBF and European biodiversity policies

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| Opportunities | Ecological accounting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create collective actions, show interdependency around ecosystems ● Creation of value for everyone ● Connect national accountant unit in businesses (NBSPAs, ecosystem assessments) ● Develop research on ecological accounting ● Take into account biodiversity dynamics |
| | Consumer awareness and education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take into account the different ages of learning (educational curricula, PhD, primary school, etc.), biodiversity should be a core point of education ● Emerging influence of label on consumption ● Guidelines on how to build a positive future for the planet ● Develop tools taking into account biodiversity issues as well as climate issues when calculating consumer impact (carbon footprint score/biodiversity score) |
| | Rising awareness on nature and biodiversity loss | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Businesses care for restoration as it shows a “quick” return on investment: they could fund more projects on it ● Research on behavioural consumer changes |

| | | |
|------------|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop “positive” tools showing improvement and not only risks ● Communication on social media ● Improve how research can share information with businesses ● Research on how to communicate complex issues ● Build a common language and simplify glossary ● Create space and opportunities for stakeholders to share knowledge and tools ● Identify key biodiversity areas |
| Challenges | Complexity of the issue and associated language: where to get started | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need a clear road map to know where to start, in which direction, what are the resources needed and where to get the support in terms of capacities and experience ● Improve awareness on the GBF and European policies on biodiversity ● Focus on relative footprint or relative score rather than trying to evaluate the absolute ● Common methodology and common transparent reporting (moving to a single score) ● Ecological accounting innovations that are able to connect targets at the national or policy level, accounting is a language more understood by business |
| | Lack of capacity and resources (expertise, financial) to implement tools and targets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research industry could allow pioneers to share their experience and create a place where researchers, companies, public authorities and everyone could talk about problems, solutions and share the experience ● Set up research programs that are embedded within companies |
| | Too much focus on climate issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indicators to measure business financial commitments for biodiversity ● Improve communication ● Translate as much as possible into numbers biodiversity data to convince more business of the importance of biodiversity. Business and research could work together on pilot projects finding the match between biodiversity data and existing business models. |

The facilitators of the collaborative session also presented how Biodiversa+ could help with the implementation of the GBF (Figure 7).

Biodiversa+ and the GBF: Role & Added value

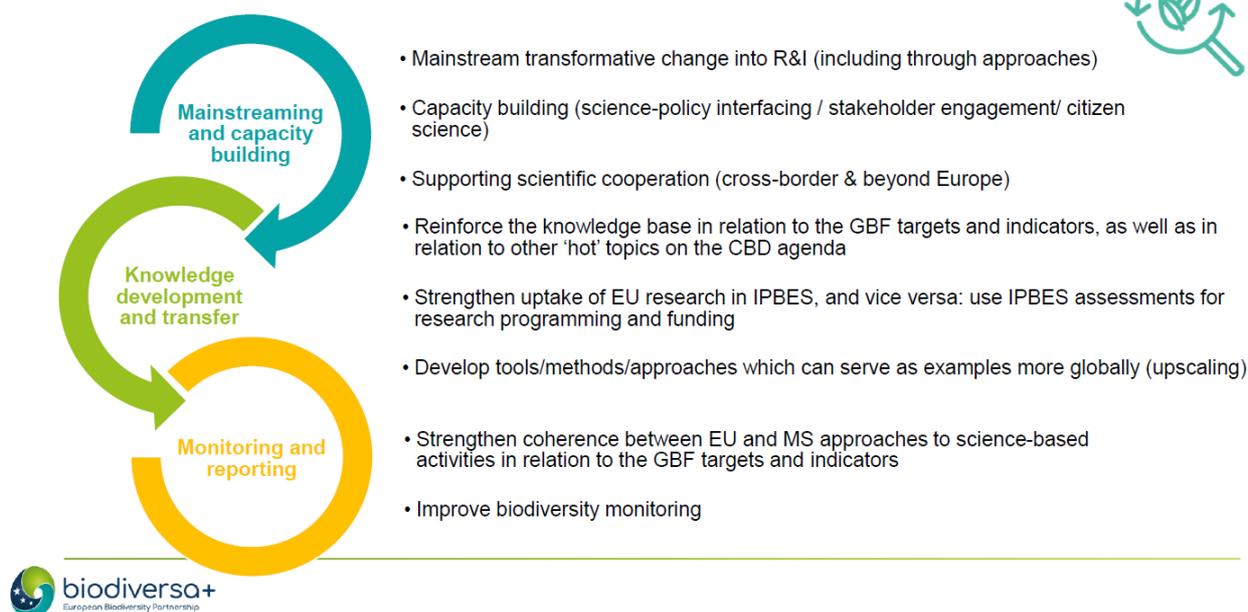


Figure 7. Role and added value of Biodiversa+ to help implementing the GBF

2.4. Panel discussion – Which tools to manage and report business impacts and dependencies on biodiversity

The panel discussion was facilitated by Lars Dinesen, co-leader of Biodiversa+ work package 3 on supporting the design and implementation of Nature-based solutions and valuing biodiversity in the private sector presented the mapping on business and biodiversity.

He first started the discussion by presenting possible avenues to enable transformative change:

- How to get more trust between stakeholders -> Improve knowledge, education, and skills
- How to avoid corruption and have clear rules -> improve dissemination and uptake,
- How to enhance an effective enforcement -> improve standardization and consistent terminology

He also presented the [Biodiversity Measurement Navigation Wheel](#) developed by the EU Business @ Biodiversity Platform to understand the emerging field of measurement approaches for biodiversity (Figure 8). It can be used as a reference to identify key criteria that inform businesses about which approach fits best their needs.



Biodiversity measurement navigation wheel: Assessment of measurement approaches for business and financial institutions

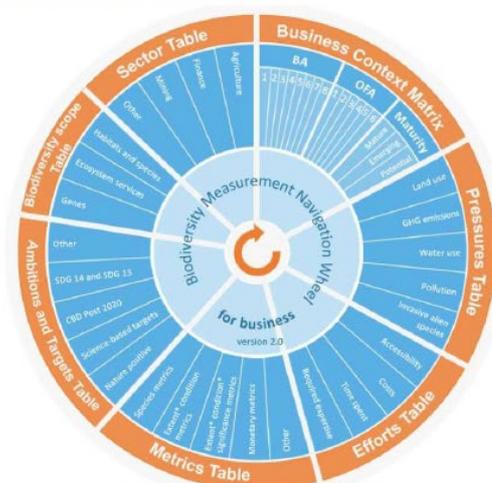


Figure 8. Biodiversity Measurement Navigation Wheel

Next Andy Plumptre, Head of [KBA](#) Secretariat presented the Key Biodiversity Areas as a tool for minimising the risk for business. There are around 16300 identified sites of global importance for biodiversity across the globe, identified following standard metrics developed with the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) (IUCN), which gives businesses a map of identified areas to protect. Data used to identify those areas are open-access and allow comparisons between countries and regions.

Key Biodiversity Areas are used in global biodiversity assessments and frameworks (IPBES Global Assessment, GBF, EU Taxonomy) but are also used by the private sector (International Finance Corporation, RepRisk & NatureAlpha, Equator Principles, etc.). The [Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool](#) (IBAT) also uses KBA data for specific risk assessment reports.

Arthur Campredon, deputy director in footprint measurement at [CDC Biodiversité](#), acknowledged the contradiction between the need for tools and the necessity of a standardized and comparable database. He stressed the importance of companies having detailed information on dependencies and aligning with global objectives. He also introduced the [Global Biodiversity Score](#) (GBS), which assesses the impacts of companies based on medium species abundance (MSA) and helps design development trajectories. He advocated for the use of a common metric like MSA for consistent measurement and evaluation of impacts, and emphasized the importance of quantifying impacts and tracking dependencies.

Next, Robin Goffaux who works at the [FRB](#) and is involved in discussions at the CBD as the French National Focal Point of the scientific and technical body of the Convention (the [SBSTTA](#)), provided feedback on COP15 discussions related to the implementation of the GBF. He mentioned the possible different interpretations of Target 15, which focuses on reducing impact and risk for businesses and noted the push for mainstreaming biodiversity into business activities, including discussions on access and benefit sharing and value chains. He highlighted the need to learn lessons from the climate change sector and the relevance of existing business and European standards for the biodiversity community.

Following the presentations from each of the panellists, they discussed, with some input from the audience the need for standardisation:

- Mentioning the demand from businesses for metrics and standards,
- Highlighting the risk of focusing on one tool and missing important elements,
- Discussing the need for businesses to consider the integrity of ecosystems beyond natural ecosystems,
- Stressing the importance of starting now and refining indicators over time, even if they are not perfect,
- Recognizing the role of KBAs in identifying areas of biodiversity importance,
- Exploring how the GBS can complement other initiatives and metrics,
- Acknowledging the complexity of biodiversity compared to climate and the need for multiple metrics for different contexts,
- Emphasizing the importance of data and metrics standardization.

2.5. Panel discussion - Why and how to engage Research & Innovation to address knowledge needs- Panel discussion in Plenary

The panel was facilitated by Frédéric Lemaître, Biodiversa+ senior science-society-policy interface officer, who started with highlighting the importance of evidence-based management on biodiversity, and stressing the central role of businesses in society and their potential contribution to biodiversity conservation (Figure 9).

He also reminded that Biodiversa+ supports knowledge generation and its use by non-academic actors such as the private sector. The partnership pushes for the collaboration between stakeholders and researchers for the co-development and cooperation in programming, funding, and valorising biodiversity-related projects.



Figure 9. Frédéric Lemaître facilitating the panel discussion

Report on the Strategic Workshop on Business & Biodiversity

Lenka Moore from [Nature Capital Coalition](#) advocated that it was a major positive change to have so many businesses representatives at CBD COP15 in Montreal and that Target 15 is a major win. We now have to work on its implementation, making use of the [Natural Capital Protocol](#) (a decision-making framework that enables organisations to identify, measure and value their direct and indirect impacts and dependencies on natural capital), and need to work with other initiatives such as [Business for Nature](#) and the [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures](#). She acknowledged the complexity of existing frameworks and called for simplification to facilitate implementation. Finally, she emphasised the impact of businesses recognising their dependence on biodiversity and making informed decisions, and she mentioned the soon availability of a report from Natural Capital Coalition with 10 recommendations for governments.

Next, Yannick Autret, a research expert in transport, energy and environment at the [French Ministry for Ecological Transition](#) discussed the integration of biodiversity with infrastructure, mentioning the establishment of [IENE](#) (Infrastructure Ecology Network Europe) in 1996. He participates to research programming and funding with the [ITTECOP](#) programme (Transport Infrastructures, Territories, Ecosystems and Landscapes) and highlighted the need for engagement from companies in research development to provide evidence-based approaches for their sectors. He also highlighted the importance of sharing the developed knowledge with those companies that are not always made aware of the research findings. He also mentioned the [BISON](#) Coordination and Support Action (CSA) at the European level, which revealed common challenges across sectors such as railways and roads.

Finally, Lars Dinesen, co-leader of Biodiversa+ work package 3 on supporting the design and implementation of Nature-based solutions and valuing biodiversity in the private sector presented the mapping on business and biodiversity, advocated for establishing national and regional knowledge hubs to gather companies and build their capacity to address biodiversity-related complexities. He highlighted the need for private sector engagement to develop nature-based solutions and identify knowledge gaps.

Following those interventions, there was an open discussion on the added value of a relationship between research and companies:

- Some businesses move faster than research so it is important to have them involved in research and innovation to fill existing gaps,
- Importance of accessible knowledge production for businesses and the need for adapting language when communicating with companies⁶,
- There is a need for risk-taking and innovative approaches. We need to think outside the box and be willing to fund and programme new and innovative research,
- The upcoming IPBES assessment on business and biodiversity will be of importance for governments and companies to make the link with research,
- How to make sure that companies effectively consider research results from Biodiversa+ funded projects?
- The need to refer to the GBF for definitions and to develop a common glossary and sharing concepts,

⁶ See: <https://handbookwildlifetraffic.info/annex-1-glossary/> Updated version (2021). Produced in cooperation with the project Horizon 2020 BISON. 'Biodiversity and infrastructure synergies and opportunities for European transport networks'.

- The need to explore ways to integrate expert knowledge from individuals outside of the research field, highlighting the key role of knowledge brokers in knowledge transfer,
- The need to move forward and not rehash discussions on the concept of nature-based solutions and their distinction from restoration.

2.6. Conclusion of the workshop

Hilde Eggermont, Chair of Biodiversa+ closed the workshop by highlighting some of the gaps identified during the day, highlighting the need for risk assessment to attract companies. She emphasized the strength of big social networks and boards in sharing information and recommended building on national and international schemes to reinforce existing initiatives.

3. Conclusion and perspectives

The biodiversity partnership supports research and innovation and the development of actionable knowledge to tackle the drivers of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation through a shared strategy, annual joint calls for research projects and capacity building activities. The workshops Business 4 Biodiversity allowed to get a better understanding of the research and innovation needs for businesses to implement the GBF and European biodiversity policies, and identified possible gaps and needs, categorised in two broad categories as follows:

Category 1: Rising awareness on nature and biodiversity loss / Education and consumer awareness

- Develop communication tools and capacity building for businesses to better understand biodiversity and the general functioning of ecosystems. There is also the need to improve awareness on the GBF and European policies on biodiversity.
- Develop activities (such as a workshop) on how to better communicate complex issues to businesses.
- Work on a common language and definitions, while referring to the GBF. The upcoming IPBES assessment on business and biodiversity will help address this need.
- Develop communication on transformative change (including the need for risk-taking and innovative approaches when funding new research and the need for change in governance) to businesses and financial institutions. The communication should not only be for businesses but for various stakeholders from all ages and backgrounds.
- Create space and opportunities for stakeholders to share knowledge and tools (workshops, online platforms, etc.)
- Develop research on the dependencies of society on biodiversity and behavioural consumer changes, including the effects of certification and labelling on consumer consumption and biodiversity.
- Work on effective communication of research project results to be used by businesses
- Develop research on ecological accounting

Category 2: Develop better tools

- Develop tools to help businesses to build a clear road map to know where to start, in which direction, what are the resources needed and where to get the support in terms of capacities and experience
- Develop new tools to calculate consumer impact and better communicate about it.
- Work on harmonizing tools and metrics for better consistency and develop a standard baseline to assess biodiversity impacts. Possibly use of a common metric like MSA for consistent measurement and evaluation of impacts. It is important to quantify impacts and track dependencies and make the data open. It is also essential to stay aware that not one tool will be fit for all and that we need to acknowledge the complexity of biodiversity compared to climate and the need for multiple metrics for different contexts/sectors/business sizes, etc.
- Develop a clear monitoring system with clear and meaningful indicators for businesses to assess trends in their impact towards recent policy requirements and targets. This should include the development of indicators to have better information on the location of business activities, crucial for determining impacts and dependencies on biodiversity.
- Develop “positive” tools showing improvement and not only risks

These elements can be taken into consideration when updating the Biodiversa+ Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) which presents the long-term strategic vision of Biodiversa+, including broad research themes that will guide a broad range of activities over the coming years. Biodiversa+ can support research and innovation by launching calls for research on the topics identified during the workshop and make sure to engage with the private sector if it leads to a specific call. It can also continue to organize workshops on a specific subject (i.e., communication, research needs, etc.) to promote exchange between researchers and businesses representatives to contribute to an effective and long-term collaboration between business and biodiversity stakeholders.

The partnership should also keep on with its work towards improving the impact of the projects it funds by communicating the results of its funded projects, both at the academic level but also in terms of policy or society-relevant products. Finally, the partnership can continue and improve its collaboration with existing initiatives such as the EU Business @ Biodiversity Platform and follow up the upcoming IPBES assessment report on business and biodiversity. There will be opportunities to review the report in 2024, to which all business and interested stakeholders will be invited. Outputs from the report will address some of the gaps identified during the workshop and give a new knowledge base, integrating views from different stakeholders, to recognize the specificity and complexity of the biodiversity issue in relation to businesses.