

Fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook report

Summary brief for business

The fifth [Global Biodiversity Outlook report](#) published by the [United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#) in September 2020, warns starkly that the world has so far failed to halt the destruction of wildlife and life-sustaining ecosystems. The report provides a global summary of progress made towards the [Aichi Biodiversity Targets](#) and is based on a range of indicators, research studies and assessments (in particular the [IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#)), as well as [national reports](#) provided by countries on their implementation of the UN CBD.

We know that action to halt nature loss is essential to address climate change, long-term food security and health. The report shows that none of the Aichi Biodiversity targets, which are a set of 20 targets adopted in 2010 by

parties around biodiversity, have been met. However, some progress has been made in countries and areas, especially where appropriate policies were put into place. In 2021 the world will have a new chance to renew our relationship with nature by adopting a new Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework during the CBD fifteenth meeting of parties (COP). The report will have an important impact on these processes.

In addition, the findings of the report will be taken up by Heads of State at the [UN Summit on Biodiversity](#) (30 Sept), under the auspices of the General Assembly. The Summit will highlight the crisis facing humanity from the degradation of biodiversity, and the urgent need to accelerate action on biodiversity for sustainable development.

WBCSD is well aligned to the CBD's goals and is engaged together with our partners to make sure that the new Framework will guide the right private sector action.

The business case is clear, recent landmark reports from the World Economic Forum on their [New Nature Economy Reports \(WBCSD Business Summaries\)](#) shows that around USD \$44 trillion is at risk from nature loss, but that there are numerous business opportunities valued at USD \$10.1 trillion which could create 395 million jobs by 2030.

This summary highlights the key headlines from the Global Biodiversity Report, the relevance of the report for companies, and how we are working to make sure that business has a coherent and consistent voice which can help to shape the new framework at CBD COP 15.

Headlines you need to know from the report

- **Targets:** None of the 20 Aichi biodiversity targets has been achieved in full, with only 6 partially met (targets 9, 11, 16, 17, 19 and 20). Significantly worsening trends are reported especially in targets relating to the drivers of biodiversity loss and to the current state of biodiversity itself.
- **Most progress has been made in the following areas:**
 - Almost 100 countries have incorporated biodiversity values into national accounting systems (target 2).
 - Deforestation has fallen by about a third compared to the previous decade (target 5).
 - Good fisheries management policies implemented have led to marine fish stocks being maintained or rebuilt (target 6).
 - Progress made on eradication of invasive alien species from islands, and of the targeting of priority species and pathways to avoid future invasive species introductions (target 9).
 - There has been significant expansion of the protected area estate, increasing over the last decade from 10% to at least 15% terrestrially, and from about 3% to at least 7% in marine areas. The protection of areas of particular importance for biodiversity has also increased from 29% to 44% (target 11).
 - Conservation actions have reduced the number of extinctions – without which extinctions of birds and mammals in the past decade would likely have been two to four times higher (target 12).
- The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is now fully operational in at least 87 countries (target 16).
- National biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) have been updated in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 by 170 countries, i.e. 85% of CBD Parties.
- There has been a substantial increase in the data and information on biodiversity available to citizens, researchers and policy makers, including through the efforts of citizen science (target 19).
- Financial resources available for biodiversity through international flows have doubled (target 20).
- **National targets are not well aligned to the Aichi targets**, in terms of scope and the level of ambition (only 23% of the targets are well aligned).
- **Subsidies:** Government subsidies to agriculture, fossil fuels and fishing are having a harmful effect: USD \$500 billion is still spent on detrimental subsidies, USD \$100bn to agriculture. Subsidies need to be rebalanced to promote healthy, sustainable diets and reduce food waste.
- **The report prioritizes several actions that need to be addressed** to achieve the 2050 Vision:
 - Efforts to conserve and restore biodiversity need to be scaled up. These need to combine increases in the extent and effectiveness of well-connected protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, large-scale restoration of degraded habitats, and improvements in the condition of nature across farmed and urban landscapes as well as inland water bodies, coasts and oceans.
- Efforts to keep climate change well below 2 degrees Celsius and close to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels are needed. Nature-based solutions can play an important role of adaptation to climate change.
- Remaining pressures driving biodiversity loss must be addressed, including invasive alien species, pollution and the unsustainable exploitation of biodiversity especially in marine and inland water ecosystems.
- Transformations need to be achieved in the production of goods and services, especially food. This will include adopting agricultural methods that can meet growing global demand while imposing fewer negative impacts on the environment and reducing the pressure to convert more land to production.
- Demand for increased food production must be limited by adopting healthier diets and reducing food waste, including limiting the consumption of other material goods and services affecting biodiversity, for example in forestry, energy and provision of fresh water.

- **In addition, the report calls for a shift away from “business as usual” across a range of human activities.** It outlines eight transitions and key components that recognize the value of biodiversity and need urgent action to restore the ecosystems on which all human activity depends:
 - 1. The land and forests transition:** conserving intact ecosystems, restoring ecosystems, combatting and reversing degradation, employing landscape level spatial planning to avoid, reduce and mitigate land-use change.
 - 2. The sustainable agriculture transition:** redesigning agricultural systems through agroecological and other innovative approaches to enhance productivity while minimizing negative impacts on biodiversity.
 - 3. The sustainable food systems transition:** enabling sustainable and healthy diets with a greater emphasis on a diversity of foods, mostly plant-based, and more moderate consumption of meat and fish, as well as dramatic cuts in the waste involved in food supply and consumption.
 - 4. The cities and infrastructure transition:** deploying “green infrastructure” and making space for nature within built landscapes to improve the health and quality of life for citizens and to reduce the environmental footprint of cities and infrastructure.
 - 5. The sustainable freshwater transition:** an integrated approach guaranteeing the water flows required by nature and people, improving water quality, protecting critical habitats, controlling invasive species and safeguarding connectivity to allow the recovery of freshwater systems from mountains to coasts.
 - 6. The sustainable climate action transition:** employing nature-based solutions, alongside a rapid phase-out of fossil fuel use, to reduce the scale and impacts of climate change, while providing positive benefits for biodiversity and other sustainable development goals.
 - 7. The sustainable fisheries and oceans transition:** promoting marine spatial planning, sustainably managing and rebuilding fisheries, ensuring the sustainability of mariculture production, protect critical habitats, reduce pollution and control invasive species spread.
 - 8. The biodiversity inclusive One Health transition:** managing ecosystems, including agricultural and urban ecosystems, as well as the use of wildlife, through an integrated approach, to promote healthy ecosystems and healthy people.



Creating the enabling environment for change

We need to build **cohesive action-oriented partnerships** to leverage game-changing innovation, financial solutions and other levers to address the systemic failures and to strengthen biodiversity resilience.

We have outlined three enablers that will need private-public cooperation:

Innovation: We need to make a step change in innovation – and this calls for strong political support. Governments need to regulate in favor of innovation with a purpose if we are going to

achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth across countries and regions.

Finance: Barriers to financing biodiversity projects and initiatives should be reduced, so that they have easy and unrestricted access to regional and international markets. Nonetheless, it will take a huge integrated effort by banks, development finance institutions and governments to ensure appropriate financing of biodiversity projects.

Policy: Countries and regions need to look at subsidy reform which could enable more financial mechanisms e.g. carbon credits, while the private sector needs to specifically scale up investments – together this can support the adoption of best practices and technologies region by region. Policy reform and its implementation, in particular harmonized standards, can enable the best practices and technologies to flow more easily across borders, and be utilized by growers worldwide.

What can business do?

Even though the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework will be adopted by government parties, the private sector as a non-state actor can still engage in the process. WBCSD has supported policy priorities through the Business for Nature coalition and used their policy recommendations to bring the private sector voice into the global debate. WBCSD's goal has been to make sure that the Framework targets are:

- More appropriate, applicable and implementable for businesses
- Linked to other targets such as the SDGs and science-based targets for climate
- Prioritized in number and, ideally, harmonious to report on.

In addition, the business community can support the process with the exchange of knowledge and best practices. WBCSD sees companies already stepping up actionable commitments in this area. For example, the [One Planet Business for Biodiversity coalition](#) brings together companies to drive action develop innovative solutions aimed at protecting and enhancing biodiversity in agricultural systems. In addition, the [Business for Nature coalition](#) launched a [press release](#) on 21 September showcasing that 560 companies (including over 50 WBCSD members) with a combined revenue of USD \$4 trillion endorsed the Call to Action advocating for governments to adopt ambitious policies to reverse nature loss this decade.

We are also seeing real action from individual companies. For instance, [Walmart](#) has pledged to achieve zero emissions by 2040 and aims to protect, manage or restore at least 50 million acres of land and one million square miles of ocean by 2030 and [Cargill](#) is committing to advance regenerative agriculture practices across 10 million acres of North American farmland by 2030. BP launched a [Biodiversity Position](#) in June 2020 and in August launched their [new strategy](#) that provides the approach to turning its net zero ambition into action and its pivot from being an international oil company focused on producing resources to an integrated energy company focused on delivering solutions for customers.

WBCSD in action

In March 2019, WBCSD launched the [Nature Action project](#), which is supporting the development of science-based targets for nature, providing guidance on nature-based solutions and mobilizing business leadership in key nature and climate events with consistent policy enablers.

WBCSD's Nature Action project worked closely with the [Science Based Targets Network \(SBTN\)](#) in the development of the methodology and a set of nine interim targets. The first guidance to show companies how to protect, restore and regenerate nature in line with science by preparing to set science-

based targets for nature is now online at this [link](#).

For more information, please contact Maria Ana Campos (campos@wbcsd.org).

Working together to deliver solutions

WBCSD is working with members to create and mobilize a collective voice of business and create solutions to deliver against these challenges through the [Food & Nature Program](#) which includes projects such as [Scaling Positive Agriculture \(SPA\)](#), [Food Reform for Sustainability and Health \(FReSH\)](#), [Nature Action project](#),

[True Value of Food](#) and the [Global Agribusiness Alliance](#). WBCSD also participates in multi-stakeholder initiatives like the [Business for Nature coalition](#), [One Planet Business for Biodiversity](#), [WEF Nature Action Agenda](#) and the [Food and Land Use Coalition \(FOLU\)](#).

Additional resources

[Download](#) the full Global Biodiversity Outlook Report.

WBCSD has published business summaries of other landmark reports, please see the entire series in the [Business Summary Library](#). Please see the [WEF New Nature Economy Report 1](#) with the business summary [here](#); the [WEF New Nature Economy Report 2](#) with the business summary [here](#); and the [IPBES Global Assessment report](#) with the business summary [here](#).

About the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

WBCSD is a global, CEO-led organization of over 200 leading businesses working together to accelerate the transition to a sustainable world. We help make our member companies more successful and sustainable by focusing on the maximum positive impact for shareholders, the environment and societies.

Our member companies come from all business sectors and all major economies, representing a combined revenue of more than USD \$8.5 trillion and 19 million employees. Our global network of almost 70 national business councils gives our members unparalleled reach across the globe. Since 1995, WBCSD has been uniquely positioned to work with member companies along and across value chains to deliver impactful business solutions to the most challenging sustainability issues.

Together, we are the leading voice of business for sustainability: united by our vision of a world where more than 9 billion people are all living well and within the boundaries of our planet, by 2050.

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