



Delivering on Target 15 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

The core needs of business for public nature data

TECHNICAL BRIEF

What is covered in this brief?

Private sector action on nature is critical to meeting global biodiversity goals, and facilitating flows of targeted and relevant nature data to businesses can accelerate action and unlock impact at scale.

This brief presents key messages from the A-Track project on:

- The role of public sector nature data in supporting business to assess and disclose their nature related issues to meet the aims of Target 15 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).
- The importance of a structured approach to defining nature data and information needs.
- Key data needs of businesses and financial institutions to better assess and disclose their nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities.
- The value of ecosystem accounting in streamlining nature information flows.

Who should read this brief?

- This brief is aimed at policy makers and standard setters working to implement Target 15 of the KMGBF who are working to support businesses and financial institutions as they assess and disclose their nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities.

→ Background

- The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) sets out an ambitious pathway to reach the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050. One of the key aims of Target 15 of the KMGBF is for governments to ***'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... along their operations, supply and value chains, and portfolios'***¹.
- As highlighted in the IPBES Business and Biodiversity Assessment², data availability is a commonly cited barrier for businesses and financial institutions to be able to assess their dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities. Increasing the coverage and collation of public nature data (i.e., data collected and collated by government agencies and local stakeholders) can therefore support an enabling environment for Target 15, whilst simultaneously underpinning monitoring of many of the other goals and targets of the KMGBF.
- Whilst increasing coverage, and accessibility of nature data in general is encouraged, structured approaches to defining specific data needs are required to meet Target 15. This will ensure efforts in data collection, compilation and dissemination between public and private sectors is targeted and efficient.

1 <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/15>

2 IPBES (2026). Summary for Policymakers of the Methodological Assessment Report on the Impact and Dependence of Business on Biodiversity and Nature's Contributions to People. IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15369060>

→ The importance of a structured approach to defining private sector needs to ensure data is relevant and fit for purpose

“Data” is different from “information”.

Nature ‘data’ comprises measures and values of different aspects of nature that require additional interpretation to convey information. Data might be quantitative, qualitative, structured or unstructured. In contrast, Nature ‘information’ comprises structured indicators derived from the data that provide decision-useful insights about nature, including dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities. Often, nature data needs to be organised, analysed and ‘transformed’ to produce useful information that can support decision making.

State of Nature’ data is only a subset of the data and information needed for corporate assessments and disclosure.

The discussion around the ‘nature data’ needs of businesses often centres around ‘State of Nature’ data. This mainly refers to data that describes the location, significance, trends in and integrity of species and ecosystems. However, much of the information required by companies to assess and disclose their dependencies and impacts on nature relates not only to the state of nature. Data is also needed on company activities at a location, including consequent pressures from those activities on nature, and the dependencies of those activities on ecosystem services such as pollination and water quality regulation.

An ‘information pathways’ approach can help structure assessments of data needs.

Information pathways describe how nature data are collated, organised and then transformed into ‘information sets’ that are applied for decision making (**Figure 1**). For a given defined decision or ‘application’ of data, understanding the final ‘information set’ that is needed to support that decision can be a starting point to define underlying data needs.

Within information pathways, some data needs refer to datasets a business would interact with directly themselves, and others refer to the data that underpin tools and methodologies used by the business. The latter type of data could, for example, be a dataset that feeds into impact models that underly Life Cycle Assessment tools.

Figure 1. Simplified nature information pathways structure



Describing data needs in terms of required characteristics can ensure that identified datasets are fit-for-purpose for specific applications.

- **Accuracy** – the degree to which nature data reflects reality. While high accuracy data is optimal, many decision contexts allow for lower accuracy data.
- **Spatial granularity** – the degree of spatial specificity reflected in nature data. For example, some nature data will describe specific locations at the scale of a few kilometres or even metres, whereas some may be country-level data.
- **Sensitivity and responsiveness** – the degree to which a dataset reflects the specific actions of a business in a specific location, and whether datasets can show changes over meaningful timeframes (for example during the course of a business strategy period) in response to changes in activities.

→ Illustrative steps of assessing dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities and related data needs

Location screening

Location screening steps within assessment processes can identify how businesses' activities interface with areas of importance for nature.

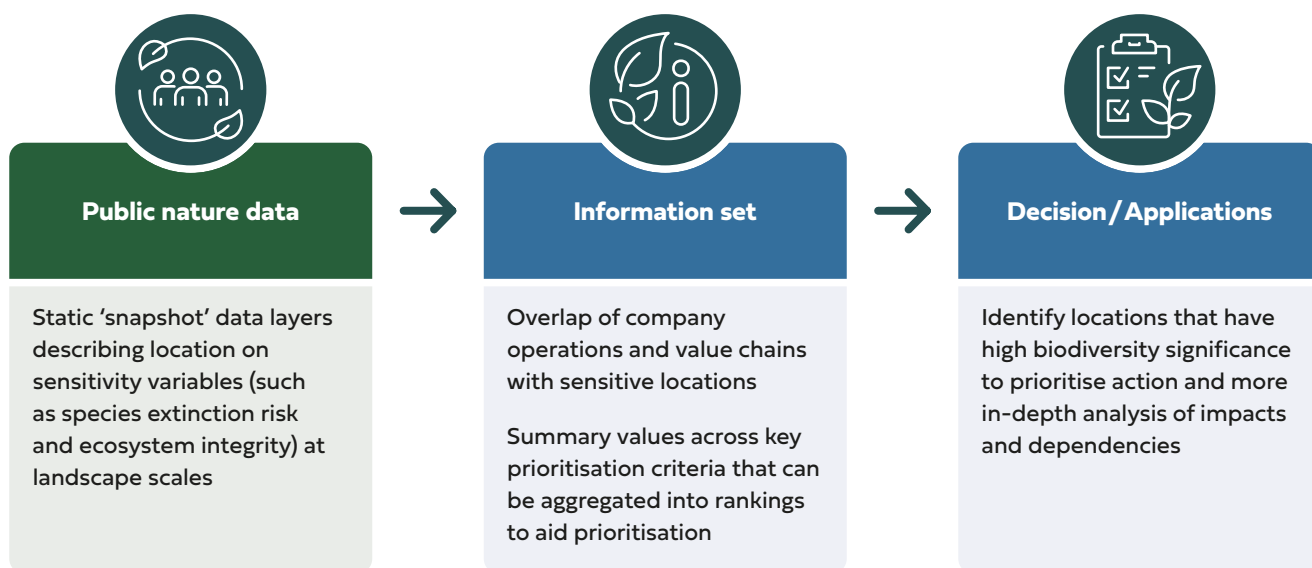
Typically, this involves first identifying the locations of business assets and supply chain activities and then overlaying with nature-related spatial data layers to extract nature data for those locations (**Figure 2**). This data can then inform combined location sensitivity scores across different criteria (e.g. biodiversity importance and water stress). Often, these scores are used to prioritise locations for more in-depth analysis and action.

Public nature data is needed on variables that denote sensitive locations.

A core characteristic of a dataset suitable for location screening is a large spatial coverage that allows comparability between areas. This means this assessment component has a clear need for accessible public nature data, beyond scales collectable by businesses themselves. This might include data on the location of important/threatened biodiversity, or on protected and conserved areas.

While 'up-to-date' information is important, full, time-series data is not necessarily required for location screening applications.

Figure 2. Data and information for location screening



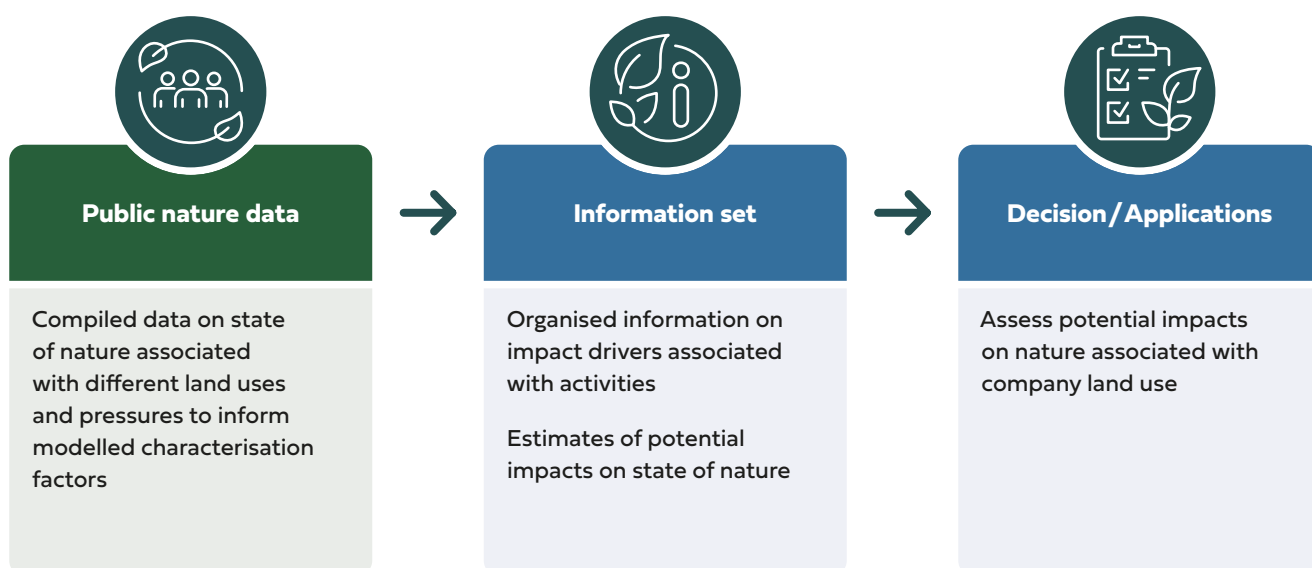
Estimating potential impacts

Gaps in datasets that underpin impact assessment tools reduce the reliability of their outputs. Public sector investments in closing these gaps would strengthen the tools and lead to more robust outcomes.

Potential impacts refer to high-level estimates of how an activity may affect nature. A common approach for businesses is to use 'footprinting' tools, which model impacts based on company pressures on nature, such as land use or pollution, to generate estimates of their overall effect.

Underpinning these impact estimations are models of pressure-state relationships (i.e., 'what is the change in state of nature associated with a given amount of a pressure?') (**Figure 3**). Notable gaps in these model-based approaches include their coverage of different ecosystem variables (for example, the ability to assess footprints on ecosystem structure and functioning, as well as different ecosystem services) and how known pressure-state relationships might apply in different locations and contexts. These method gaps are directly related to gaps in the datasets that underpin them.

Figure 3. Data and information for assessing potential impacts



Measuring ‘on the ground’ outcomes and trends

Nature impacts and dependencies are location specific, and fully measuring them requires ‘on the ground’ data. Because these impacts and dependencies often occur at landscape scales – e.g. extending beyond individual sites or operational boundaries – public data are essential.

While company-level data is seen as the most robust and granular data for measuring impacts and dependencies at site-level, public nature data is often required to understand changes in the state of nature within the wider landscape/seascape to evaluate impacts and dependencies, including data collected through landscape initiatives and local stakeholders. This includes understanding both the effects of cumulative pressures in the landscape, and also understanding cascading effects in the landscape from local changes in habitats or key species, as well as providing information on the condition of the wider ecosystems that may provide ecosystem services that businesses depend on.

Understanding outcomes requires datasets that can show how nature has changed at a location compared to a baseline, at relevant spatial granularity. For some use cases, these outcomes may need external verification.

Figure 4. Data and information for measuring changes in state of nature



Streamlining public nature data through ecosystem accounting to support Target 15

‘Ecosystem accounting’ is a structured approach to organise nature data in a coherent and comparable manner. This allows common understanding of the relationships between the economy and ecosystems and how these change over time.

Ecosystem accounting, a subset of natural capital accounting, focuses on identifying ecosystem ‘assets’, measuring their ‘stocks’ and the ‘flows’ of benefits they provide to stakeholders. The United Nations System of Environmental Economic Accounting–Ecosystem Accounting (UN SEEA³) is the internationally accepted standard for ecosystem accounts, and provides a means to harmonize the way in which both public and private sectors conceptualise ecosystems as a set of spatially defined assets that provide a range of services.

Adopting and mainstreaming ecosystem accounting at country, sub-national and landscape scales to streamline and organise key datasets can support data flows to the private sector.

There is strong alignment between the structure of the UN SEEA-EA and the underlying architecture of assessment and disclosure standards for companies and financial institutions, such as those developed by the Taskforce for Nature Related Financial Disclosure⁴ and Global Reporting Initiative⁵. This includes understanding of ecosystem extent and condition and of the ecosystem services provided by spatially defined ecosystem assets.

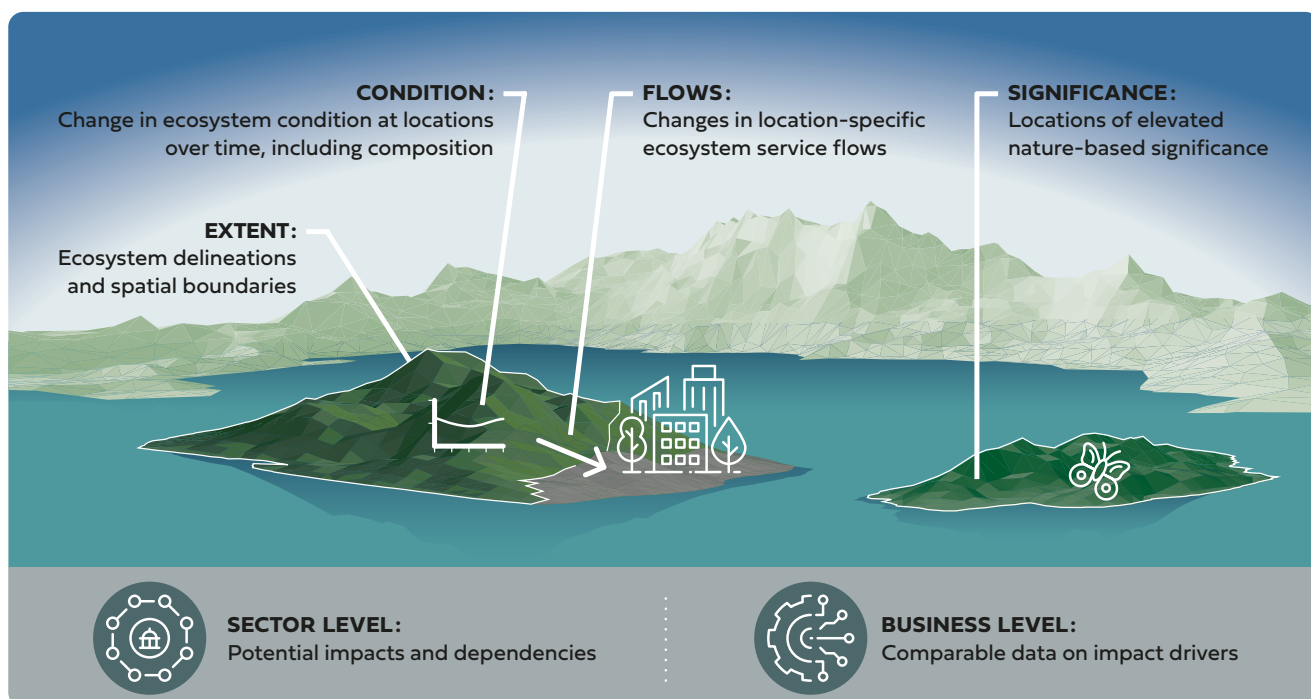
Collecting and organising public nature data using ecosystem accounting structures at country, sub-national and landscape scales can therefore streamline flows of data and information between public and private sectors (**Figure 5**).

3 United Nations, European Union, FAO, IMF, OECD & UNEP. 2024. *System of Environmental-Economic Accounting – Ecosystem Accounting*. New York, United States of America.

4 Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD). (2023a). *Guidance on the identification and assessment of nature-related issues: The LEAP approach*. TNFD. <https://tnfd.global/publication/additional-guidance-on-assessment-of-nature-related-issues-the-leap-approach/#publication-content>

5 GRI 101: Biodiversity standard 2024: <https://www.globalreporting.org/search/?query=GRI+101%3a+Biodiversity>

Figure 5. Information and data needs for corporate assessment and disclosure. Many of these align the ecosystem accounting structures.



Facilitating public-private nature information flows to achieve Target 15

Barriers exist to the private sector accessing and applying public nature data

These barriers include public-private data sharing limitations, licensing costs or restrictions, dataset incompatibilities, inconsistent data quality and a lack of awareness among those in the private sector of available public data. Within the public sector, the absence in many countries of a formal mandate for national statistical offices to support the private sector with data, and the lack of formal data-sharing structures and relevant funding also make it difficult to establish procedures for data sharing.

Policies that enable availability and accessibility of public sector ecosystem data can advance Target 15 of the GBF.

Data products such as maps of ecosystem extent and condition can support businesses in assessing and disclosing their impacts and dependencies on nature. To maximize effectiveness, these data sets should apply the FAIR principles to data (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable). Reducing commercial barriers to use whenever possible enables broader private sector access and application of such datasets. Raising awareness of available public data (e.g., from IBAT and other data platforms) amongst private sector actors can also contribute significantly to its use.

→ Key references

- [UNEP-WCMC, IDEEA Group, Vlaamse Instelling voor Technologisch Onderzoek \(VITO\), Capitals Coalition. \(2025\). Integrating nature information into decision-making: an assessment of user needs. A-Track. Cambridge, United Kingdom](#)
- [UNEP-WCMC, ICF, Capitals Coalition, Arcadis \(2024\) Discussion paper – How can corporate biodiversity measurement and reporting align more closely with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework? Align Project – Aligning accounting approaches for nature](#)
- [Improving the natural capital data flow between governments and businesses in the EU | We Value Nature](#)
- [NEA and UNEP-WCMC \(2024\). Sharing biodiversity data: why the public sector should share biodiversity information and the challenges that it faces](#)



A-Track is a four-year, €11 million project that will accelerate action for nature by business, financial institutions and government.

A-Track brings together leading thought leaders and practitioners who have been driving change in the measurement and valuation of natural capital and biodiversity in business, finance and government.

Partners have led the development or implementation of guidelines and standards for measurement of nature impacts and dependencies for improved decision-making, including: biodiversity footprinting, natural capital assessment and accounting, and business models and finance that contribute to nature positive outcomes.

Find out more at: **a-track.info**

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