

Lisbon Declaration

WBCSD Global Network Partners Initiative for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

Consensual scientific assessments alert that the planet is losing nature at an unprecedented rate, towards dangerous tipping points. Over the last 50 years, wildlife populations have declined by 60%, and scientists warn that we have entered a 6th mass extinction of life on Earth. According to the IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, released in May 2019, the biosphere, upon which humanity depends, is being altered to an unparalleled degree across all spatial scales and biodiversity is declining faster than at any time in human history. This massive loss of nature is degrading the natural systems that underpin our societies and economies, and the rate of degradation is accelerating. The consequences are even worse where populations are more directly dependent on nature, further exacerbating an already inequitable world.

Alongside with global warming, which is one of the main drivers for this loss, the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services is one of the most important challenges that the world currently faces. The destruction of nature undermines human health and well-being, societal resilience and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It places severe costs on businesses and economies, and makes addressing other global and complex challenges, such as social inequalities, even more challenging.

Biodiversity and ecosystems services underpin our prosperity and well-being. Restoring the fragile balance of the natural world and life on Earth is, therefore, not only an environmental concern, but also an economic, societal and moral imperative.

Business impacts on nature are well-known and often visible, but the fundamental dependence of businesses on healthy natural living systems is often less well understood. The degradation of ecosystems services represents an unsurmountable systemic risk for companies and our global economy: risks to operations; supply chain continuity, predictability and resilience; liability risks; and regulatory, reputational, market and financial risks.

Forward-thinking businesses understand that they depend on a healthy natural world. A better understanding of this connection can lead to significant benefits for society and nature, alongside the creation of business value. By adopting regenerative value chains, companies should play a critical role in the transformative change required in many production and consumption systems – from energy to food, fiber and water, among many others.

Past and ongoing rapid declines in biodiversity, ecosystem functions and many of nature's contributions to people mean that most international societal and environmental goals, such as those embodied in the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, will not be achieved. These declines will also undermine other goals, such as those specified in the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity. And the projections will only get worse due to drivers such as rapid human population growth, combined with unsustainable production and consumption.

2020 marks a critical opportunity to halt the deterioration of the natural world, the decline of life on Earth, and the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services that underpin human wellbeing and the global

economy. Two events will be of vital importance: the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille and the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) in Kunming. These events can be a moment for change, should all actors, including companies and other players, decide to take collective action to address the challenges biodiversity faces today.

During the next twelve months, we have an opportunity to set up international commitments to reverse nature loss, calling on companies to take bold action, as well as governments and global leaders to adopt policies to level the playing field and incentivize the wider business community to act and enable a global transformation.

As partners of the [World Business Council for Sustainable Development \(WBCSD\)](#) – who integrates [Business for Nature](#) (a global coalition calling for action to reverse nature loss and restore the planet’s vital natural systems), the undersigned [WBCSD Global Network Partners](#) believe that a strong business voice is critical to drive the change needed at a global level, and as such declare to commit to, during the following twelve months:

- work with our member companies for them to understand their impacts and dependencies, take action, make the required transformational changes, and help them identify local and global solutions and deploy them at appropriate scale;
- become partners of the Business for Nature global coalition network, collaborate and act as its ambassadors in the countries in which each signatory Global Network partner operates;
- support Business for Nature in the preparation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15), through a dedicated feedback regarding local companies’ recommendations;
- invite our members to take action through ambitious concrete commitments to live in harmony with nature in the countries where each signatory Global Network partner operates, developing its own agenda or, for example, through replicating the [act4nature](#) initiative, adapting it to each local context;
- help companies identify the solutions that need to be implemented to protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services, namely through the following practices:
 - Working through their own operations and value chains to identify, reduce and avoid impacts, while also identifying dependencies, nature-based solutions and other opportunities that create benefits for nature and people;
 - Leading collaboration across all sectors of society in landscapes, river basins and seascapes to ensure ecosystem conservation and restoration, and the supply of ecosystem services delivered by nature to society and the economy;
 - Implementing systemic change to organizations and business models by identifying impacts and dependencies on natural capital, and taking nature into account when making decisions, disclosing and reporting; and
 - Recommending and promoting policy changes to governments to establish the policy frameworks needed to drive economic changes as scale.

We, the WBCSD Global Network Partners, pledge for the goals and commitments of this Declaration and will firmly act together to uphold it.

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About 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. WBCSD is 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.

www.wbcasd.org

About WBCSD Global Network:

The WBCSD's Global Network is an alliance of more than 60 CEO-led business organizations worldwide. The Network, encompassing some 5,000 companies, is united by a shared commitment to provide business leadership for sustainable development in their respective countries and regions.

www.wbcasd.org/Overview/Global-Network

About Business for Nature:

Business for Nature is a global coalition calling for action to reverse nature loss and restore the planet's vital natural systems. World leaders have an opportunity in 2020 to forge an international agreement to reverse nature loss similar to the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. Together we will bring a united business voice to these vital international negotiations to help deliver the result we need for nature and people.

<https://businessfornature.org/>

About Act4Nature:

Act4nature is a collaborative initiative by EPE (Entreprises pour l'Environnement) and a number of partners with the aim of mobilizing companies to protect, promote and restore biodiversity. Scientists, economists and public authorities agree that there is urgent need to act by leveraging the resources commanded by key players to deliver concrete solutions now and in the medium and longer terms. This initiative aims to develop company-wide collective momentum, driven by committed CEOs in all industries, followed by their colleagues and the public at large. In joining act4nature, businesses undertake to include biodiversity in their global development strategies to help achieve the biodiversity targets set by the international community. The first commitments were published on July 10th 2018 during act4nature launch event.

www.act4nature.com/en/