

Guide to using public biodiversity data in the private sector

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Biodiversity, and more broadly nature, is the foundation of our economy and society. Yet businesses and financial institutions still struggle to integrate biodiversity considerations into their decision making.

Our analysis shows that **although public biodiversity and nature related data is abundant, it remains significantly underused** due to gaps in quality resolution, fragmentation, usability challenges, and capacity in interpretation, while growing expectations — including over 733 organisations representing USD 22.4 trillion in assets committing to TNFD — reinforce that companies cannot wait for perfect data and must start acting with what is already available.

1. Growing expectations for companies

Governments, investors, and customers increasingly expect companies to assess their nature-related DIRO's (Dependencies, Impacts, Risks and Opportunities). New rules and standards are making this expectation clearer.

Examples include new sustainability reporting rules and due-diligence laws, as well as voluntary reporting frameworks. These do not require companies to become biodiversity experts, however they do require companies to have an understanding of nature & biodiversity and to show that decisions are based on evidence and reasonable analysis. To do this, companies need access to robust data.

In Europe and beyond, companies are being asked to:

- Understand how their activities affect biodiversity;
- Identify risks and opportunities linked to biodiversity loss;
- Be transparent about these risks and how they are managed.

2. Why companies find nature- and biodiversity-related data difficult to use

This report identifies several common problems as to why companies find it difficult to use nature- and biodiversity-related data :

- Information is distributed across many different platforms and tools, requiring companies to understand and navigate which datasets are most relevant to the specific questions they are trying to answer.
- It is not always clear how reliable the data is for specific uses
- Data quality and detail vary between regions
- Few people inside companies have experience working with nature- and biodiversity-related data
- Biodiversity responsibilities are often split across departments, meaning no single team has clear ownership, which complicates coordination and consistent action.

These challenges are not only technical. They also relate to organisational capacity, capabilities, and confidence.

3. You do not need perfect data to take action

A key message of this report is simple: companies do not need perfect nature- and biodiversity-related data to start acting.

Many companies are already using existing data to improve decisions. Even if data is not complete, it can still help to give initial insights to start making better decisions than without data. What matters is understanding the limits of the data and using it carefully.

Starting small helps build experience. Over time, this makes it easier to improve how biodiversity is included in everyday business decisions.

4. Practical steps companies can take now

This report highlights realistic actions that most companies can take:

- Identify the specific biodiversity question you need to answer, then determine which datasets will help you with answering your questions
- Start with available nature- and biodiversity-related data: Use publicly available data and tools to get a first picture of where your biodiversity risks may exist.
- Integrate biodiversity into your decision-making. Consider biodiversity when choosing sites, suppliers, or investments, not only at the reporting stage.
- Build basic understanding of nature & biodiversity inside the company. Simple explanations and practical examples help teams understand why biodiversity matters for their work.
- Use expert support when needed. Public data can provide a high-level overview. For a more detailed assessment, including at high-risk locations or activities, specialist input may still be required.
- Work together with others. Many companies rely on the same nature- and biodiversity-related data. Supporting shared data systems helps ensure this information remains available and up to date.

The report presents a landscape showing how biodiversity data flows through four key groups. **Raw data collectors** (e.g., research institutes, NGOs, citizen science) gather primary data. **Aggregators** like GBIF and OBIS standardize and centralize it. **Intermediaries** such as IBAT and ENCORE translate it into actionable insights. **End users (companies, financial institutions, policymakers)** apply these insights for risk management, compliance, and strategy. Though fragmented, this system is complementary; its effectiveness depends on collaboration, interoperability, and shared responsibility for data quality and access.

5. Biodiversity is a business opportunity

Managing biodiversity is not only about avoiding problems. Companies that act early can benefit from:

- Enhanced risk management and long term resilience, helping companies anticipate and reduce future risks.
- Stronger trust from investors, customers, and communities
- Better preparation for future rules and expectations
- New opportunities for more sustainable products and services
- Early compliance with emerging regulations, including the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and its biodiversity standard (ESRS E4), the EU Taxonomy for Sustainable Activities, the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) reducing future reporting and operational burdens.

Businesses that understand biodiversity are better positioned to adapt in a changing economy.

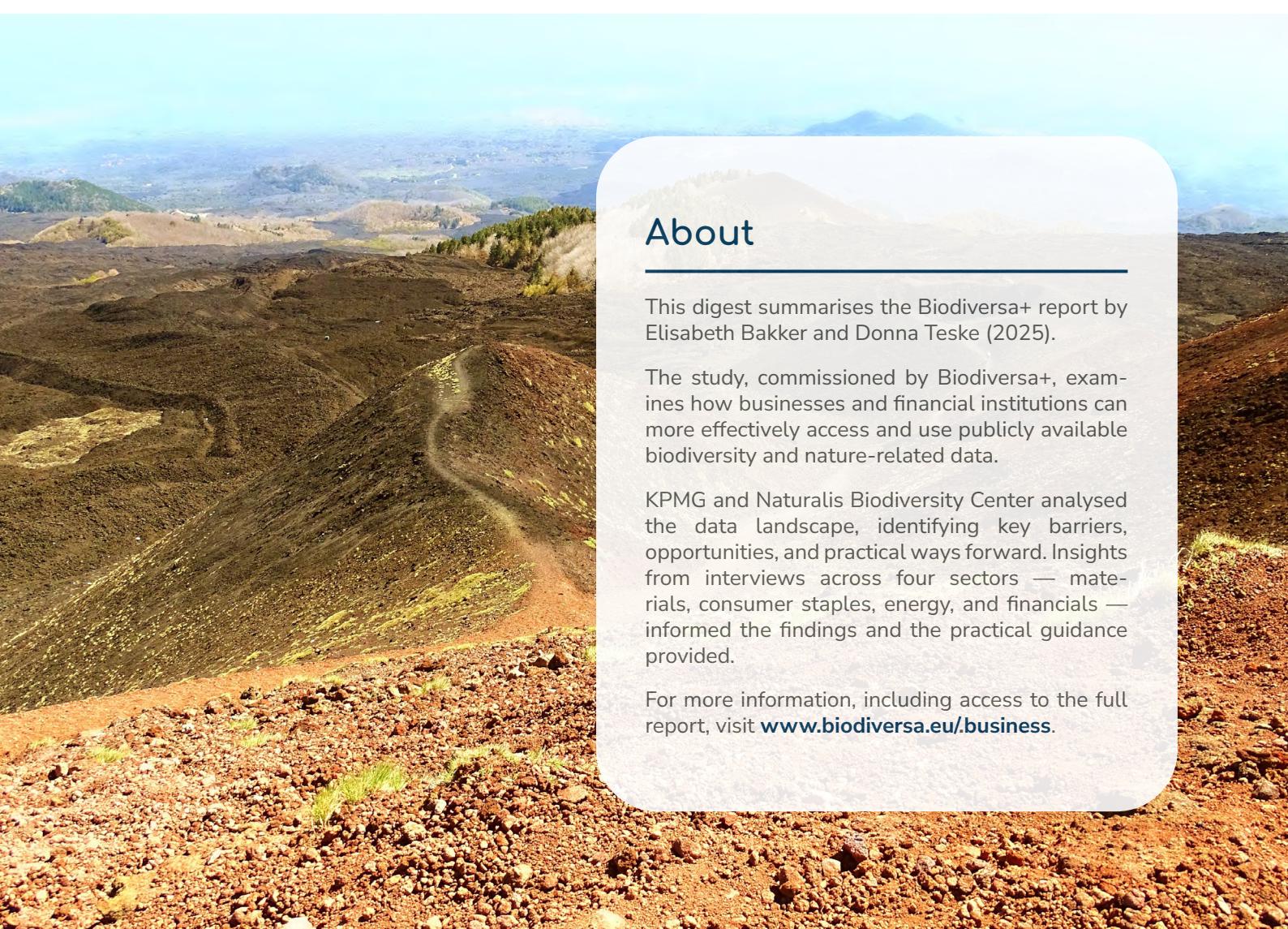
6. The key takeaway

Biodiversity is rapidly becoming a core element of strategic business decision-making. While a large volume of biodiversity and nature-related data is already available, not all datasets are public, complete, or suitable for every use case, and important gaps remain. Nonetheless, the existing data is sufficient for companies to begin taking informed first steps. Organisations that act early, even with imperfect but fit-for-purpose data, gain a clear strategic advantage: they build internal capabilities sooner, are better prepared for emerging expectations, and become more resilient and competitive in a market that is shifting fast.



Nature- and Biodiversity-data providers <i>(Entities that collect and generate nature and biodiversity data)</i>		Nature- and Biodiversity-data intermediaries <i>(Entities that add value to nature or biodiversity data before it reaches end users)</i>	Nature- and Biodiversity-data users <i>(Entities that apply nature and biodiversity data for decision-making, investment, or compliance. Some are also raw data collectors.)</i>
 Raw data collectors <i>(entities that generate and collect nature and biodiversity data directly from the field / laboratory)</i>	 Aggregated data <i>(aggregated and standardised data that are further dispersed amongst users by several entities or platforms, mostly focused on a specific type of data seen in the categories below)</i>	 Service providers & products <i>(these entities build products / develop metrics/models from nature and biodiversity data for corporate and financial end users)</i>	 End users <i>(entities that apply nature and biodiversity data directly from data or service providers for decision-making, investment or compliance. Some are also raw data collectors)</i>
Scientific institutions e.g., Naturalis Biodiversity Center employs novel monitoring techniques, producing research papers and accompanying datasets as outputs.	Ecosystem extent and condition e.g., Global Forest Watch, Corine Land Cover <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community composition Ecosystem condition (functioning, structure and composition) Ecosystem services Ecosystem thresholds Ecosystem classification / land cover 	Dashboards and Tools e.g., IBAT, WWF Biodiversity Risk Filter, ENCORE, HUB Ocean's Ocean Sensitive Areas (OSA)	Private sector: Companies
NGO's e.g., Royal Society for the Protection of birds	Protected and conservation areas e.g., KBA, WDPA, Natura2000	(Modelled) metrics and methods e.g., Potentially Disappeared Fraction (PDF), Biodiversity Intactness Index (BII)	Private sector: Financial institutions (includes banks, investors, insurance companies etc)
Citizen science platforms e.g., iNaturalist	Species data , e.g., GBIF, OBIS, IUCN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genetic composition Species traits Species occurrence Species distributions and abundances 		Others (e.g., Public sector, non-profit, science, policy makers etc)
Local and Indigenous knowledge holders e.g., Karen people of Thailand and Myanmar	Impact drivers of biodiversity loss data e.g., Copernicus, Global Forest Watch, ESA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land and sea use change Overexploitation Pollution Climate change Invasive species & diseases Other anthropogenic pressures 		
Governments & (environmental protection) agencies e.g., PBL in the Netherlands			
Private sector and consulting firms e.g., any private sector company that performs biodiversity monitoring			
Earth Obs data e.g., ESA satellite images			

The data landscape – from raw data to corporate decision-making



About

This digest summarises the Biodiversa+ report by Elisabeth Bakker and Donna Teske (2025).

The study, commissioned by Biodiversa+, examines how businesses and financial institutions can more effectively access and use publicly available biodiversity and nature-related data.

KPMG and Naturalis Biodiversity Center analysed the data landscape, identifying key barriers, opportunities, and practical ways forward. Insights from interviews across four sectors — materials, consumer staples, energy, and financials — informed the findings and the practical guidance provided.

For more information, including access to the full report, visit www.biodiversa.eu/business.

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