

# Business & Biodiversity Benchmark (Pilot): Key Results

How European companies are addressing biodiversity loss: introducing the benchmark, main insights from the pilot benchmark results and what's next for 2025



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**Introduction** – Biodiversity loss significantly threatens our ecosystems and economies. Businesses contribute to this loss through activities like agriculture, transportation, mining, and manufacturing. These activities drive biodiversity loss by changing land and sea use, overexploitation, climate change, pollution, and introducing invasive species. Mitigating biodiversity loss is crucial for businesses to maintain access to natural resources and processes.

### International agreements and regulations

The private sector’s role in tackling biodiversity challenges has been integrated in international agreements and regulations. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) dedicated, for example, target 15 to businesses and urges them to assess, disclose, and reduce biodiversity-related risks and negative impacts. Similarly, the EU’s Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) includes a topical standard for biodiversity, requiring companies to disclose biodiversity-related information, especially if it is material to their business.

### The Business & Biodiversity Benchmark

To comprehensively assess companies' biodiversity performance and progress, VBDO, in collaboration with PwC Netherlands, will launch the Biodiversity & Business Benchmark in 2025. This benchmark will rank companies on their performance, provide insights into companies’ approaches to biodiversity and why some companies perform better than others. In this way, it seeks to encourage companies to integrate biodiversity into their strategies, policies, actions, and targets. In 2024, VBDO conducted a pilot to establish the bench-

mark, yielding valuable insights which are summarised on the next page.

### Scope and structure of the benchmark

The Benchmark evaluates and compares companies based on four categories inspired by the CSRD reporting requirements. The current scope of the benchmark includes companies from high-impact and high-dependency sectors: Food & Beverage, Extractive, and Pharmaceutical. This scope may expand in the future.

### The pilot

The 2024 pilot tested and finalised the methodology and criteria. It assessed 14 of the 30 companies planned for the 2025 benchmark. Assessments were based on publicly available data, such as annual reports, company policies, and third-party data like CDP reports. Going forward, company feedback on scores will be integral to the benchmark’s methodology, allowing companies to provide additional context. However, this feedback step was not included in the pilot phase to ensure a level playing field for the first official benchmark execution.

## The four categories of the Business & Biodiversity Benchmark

<b>STRATEGY AND BUSINESS MODEL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent is biodiversity integrated into the company's strategy and business model?</li> <li>Is biodiversity discussed at board level and how is it integrated into the company’s materiality analysis, risk- and impact assessments, consultations, public commitments and advocacy?</li> </ul>
<b>POLICY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the company integrate biodiversity into policies for both its own operations and its value chain?</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is the company taking action to achieve its biodiversity-related strategy and policy objectives?</li> </ul>
<b>TARGETS AND METRICS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is biodiversity included in company targets and metrics that track the effectiveness of policies and key actions?</li> </ul>



## MAIN INSIGHTS OF THE PILOT BENCHMARK RESULTS

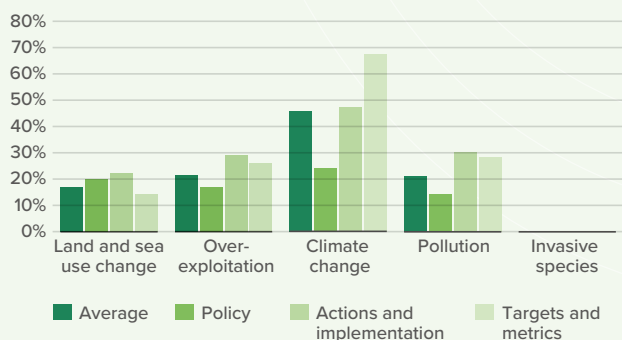
### 1. The approach taken to address biodiversity loss is not sufficiently formalised

- The average benchmark score was just 22% of the total points. Companies scored an average of 15% in the ‘strategy and business model’ and ‘policy’ categories, compared to 26% in ‘actions and implementation’ and 27% in ‘targets and metrics’.
- Only 43% of companies recognised biodiversity or nature as a material topic.
- Policies are rarely signed off by the board and often lack defined scope or time.
- Only 5% of companies assess biodiversity-related risks, impacts, dependencies, and opportunities.

### 2. Companies are predominately focusing on climate change compared to other impact drivers of biodiversity loss

- Companies gained most points because of climate change related questions. This especially stands out in ‘targets and metrics’, as figure 1 shows.
- Companies didn’t report on invasive species. Scores for other impact drivers were more evenly distributed, but on average companies scored lowest on ‘land and sea use change’. While this impact driver was addressed more frequently in the ‘policy’ category than other impact drivers, it was less included in ‘actions and implementation’ and ‘targets and metrics’.

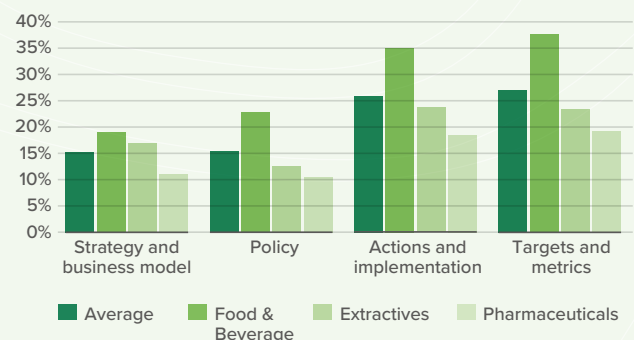
Figure 1 | Scores in % for each impact driver per benchmark category



### 3. Sectors show varying maturity levels regarding biodiversity policy, actions and targets

- The Food & Beverage sector scored highest in all benchmark categories, followed by Extractives, while Pharmaceuticals scored the lowest (see figure 2).
- Pharmaceutical companies not only had less comprehensive reporting in general, but also specifically lacked policies, actions, and targets on land and sea use change. While on average scores for this impact driver are low, as figure 1 shows, Food & Beverage companies score relatively high for this impact driver compared to the other sectors.
- Extractive companies, unlike pharmaceutical firms, did not score significantly worse on any specific impact driver or category. While they acknowledged biodiversity-related issues and had some policies, actions, and targets, their overall disclosure was limited, leading to consistently low scores.

Figure 2 | Scores in % per benchmark category and sector



### Next steps

- The first formal benchmark assessments will take place in Q2 of 2025, following the publication of the 2024 annual reports.
- Before publication, benchmarked companies will each receive their filled-in assessment and be given the opportunity to review and provide additional information.
- VBDO will review each company’s feedback and respond to it.
- Benchmark results will be analysed and compiled into a report.
- By the end of 2025, VBDO will present the first Business & Biodiversity Benchmark.

To stay informed about the Business & Biodiversity Benchmark and other work of VBDO, follow us on [LinkedIn](#) or [subscribe to our newsletter](#).