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**Sports
for Nature**

Self-Assessment tool

Mapping your relationship with nature

August 2026

Founding partners



International
Olympic
Committee



Convention on
Biological Diversity

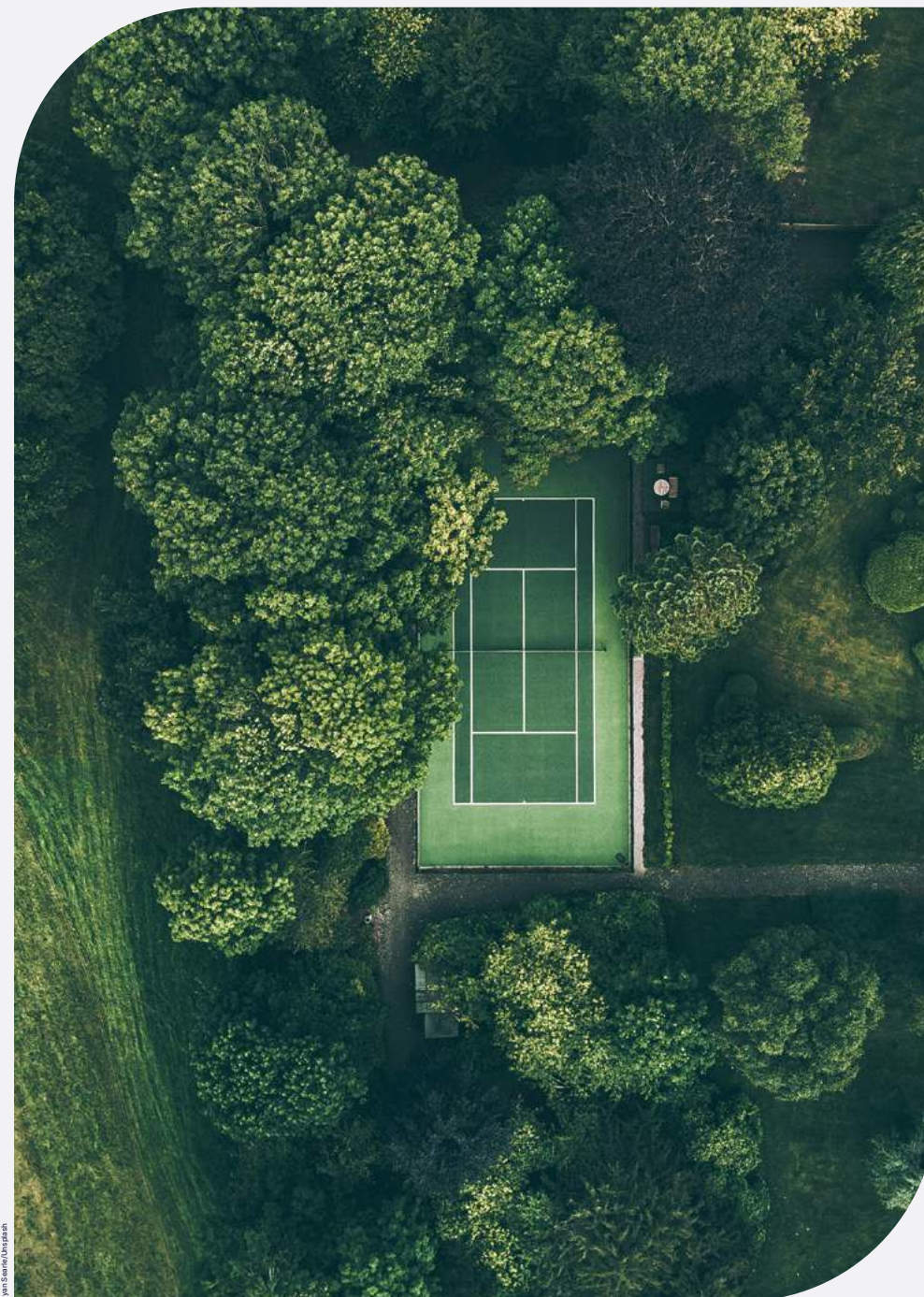


DONA BERTARELLI
PHILANTHROPY

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Introduction

This guide is designed to help sport organisations assess their relationship with nature. It serves as a starting point to explore how your operations, events, and activities impact the environment—both positively and negatively—before diving into deeper analysis and action plans.

Key Objectives

- 1. Recognise Connections** – Identify how your organisation's activities interact with nature, from daily operations to major events.
- 2. Assess Your Environment** – Understand the natural surroundings you operate in and how they are affected by your work
- 3. Set Priorities** – Focus on key areas where your organisation can make a real difference in protecting and supporting nature.

By following these steps, your organisation will be better equipped to make informed decisions, set clear goals, and take positive action for nature.

1.1 Structure of the Self-Assessment

The self-assessment features two main parts. Part 1 explores your organisation's activities and Part 2 focuses on their physical location.



PART 1

What kind of activities is your organisation undertaking and how are they connected to nature?



PART 2

Where are your organisation's activities taking place?

1.2 Using this Guide

You can use this guide independently, without external support. While it is possible for one person to use the tool alone, we encourage the creation of a team or working group to deepen your organisation's understanding of and engagement with nature.

Key Components

- 1. Excel Assessment Spreadsheet** – A complementary Excel spreadsheet is available to help you list activities and assess their impact on nature and biodiversity. This is optional but useful for organising your work and gaining a clear overview of your environmental impact.
- 2. Action Points** – Key steps requiring action are marked with a green arrow (→) throughout the guide.
- 3. Additional Resources** – You will find links to further information or practical tools in some of the sections. These are highlighted in green and underlined for easy access.

This guide is your first step in understanding your organisation's connection to nature. More resources will follow to help you take meaningful action.

1.3 Getting the Basics Right

Definitions



1

BIODIVERSITY

is a synonym for 'biological diversity' or 'living nature' and refers to the variety of all living things.



2

NATURE

is all life on Earth, including biodiversity, together with the geology, water, climate and all inanimate components that comprise our planet.



3

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

refer to the contributions of ecosystems to the benefits that are used in economic and other human activity (UN, 2021).

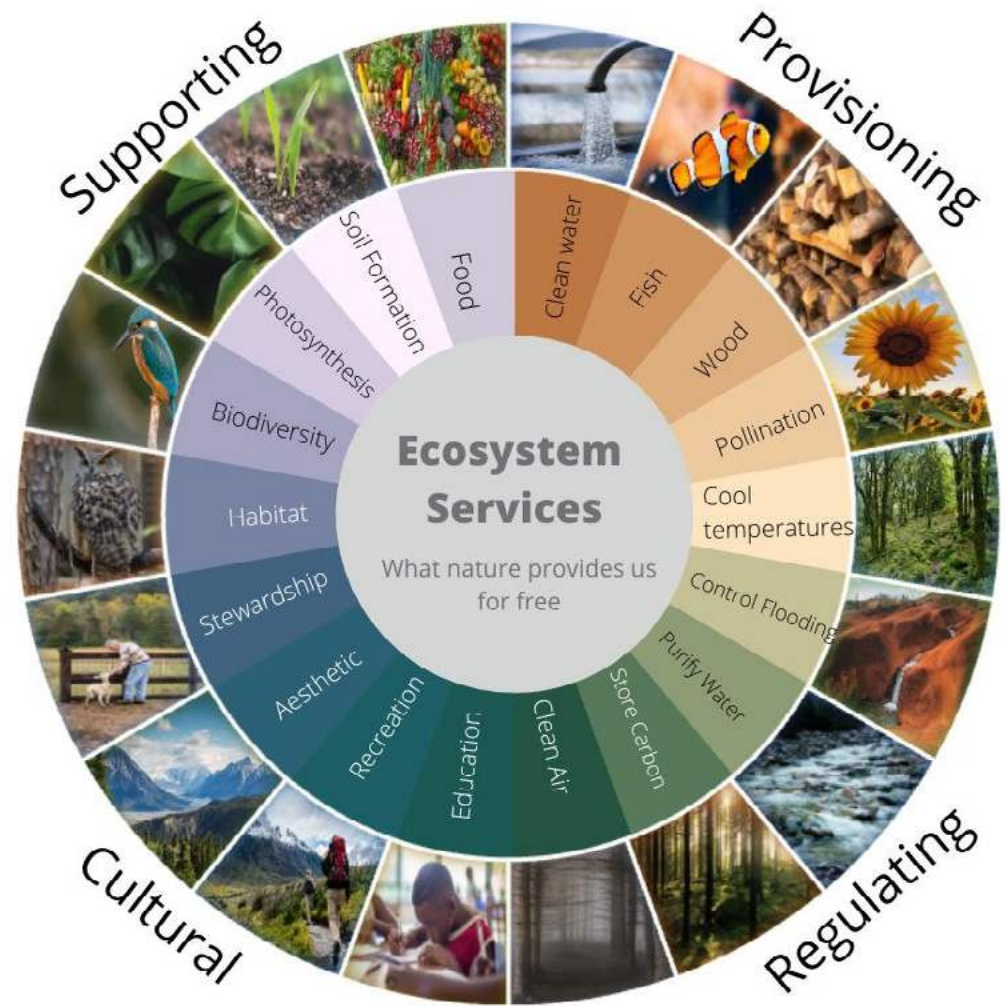
1.4 Overview of Ecosystem Services

Sports depend on nature's essential ecosystem services—the benefits that healthy ecosystems provide, such as clean air, fresh water, climate regulation, and natural landscapes for recreation.

These services are crucial for sporting activities, from maintaining playable fields to ensuring safe water quality. However, nature's ability to continue providing these services depends on its health, which is under increasing pressure.

At the same time, sports can impact nature both positively and negatively through events, operations, and supply chains.

While some activities may harm ecosystems, sports organisations also have opportunities to protect and restore nature through sustainable practices.



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1.5 Threats to Biodiversity

Human activities and environmental changes are putting pressure on biodiversity, threatening ecosystems and species around the globe.

Biodiversity Pressures



Changes in the use of land, sea or water

Natural environments like forests, grasslands, or coastal areas are cleared or altered for human activities.



Overexploitation of Resources

Overuse of natural resources can deplete the environment faster than it can recover.



Pollution

Chemicals, waste, and plastics can severely impact ecosystems, especially waterways and coastal areas.



Climate Change

Animals and plants struggling to survive in new climates, coral reefs dying from warmer oceans, and extreme weather destroying habitats



Invasive Species

Non-native plants, animals, insects, or microorganisms that can disrupt local ecosystems by outcompeting native species.



Matt Palmer/Unsplash



Changes in the use of land, sea or water

Habitat loss occurs when natural areas, like forests, wetlands, or grasslands, are destroyed or transformed by human activities, such as urbanisation, agriculture, or industrial development. As habitats shrink or deteriorate, many species lose the space and resources they need to survive, leading to population declines or even extinction.

Sports can contribute to habitat loss and degradation in various ways. Constructing new sports facilities, stadiums, or training grounds often involves clearing large areas of land, displacing wildlife, and disrupting ecosystems. Outdoor sports events in natural areas can lead to soil erosion, trampling of vegetation, and disturbance to animal habitats. For instance, building infrastructure such as parking lots, access roads, and spectator areas can further fragment ecosystems, reducing their connectivity and resilience.



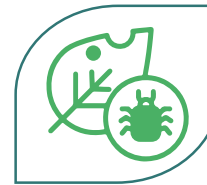
Pollution

Pollution occurs when harmful substances like chemicals, plastics, or waste are introduced into the environment, affecting air, water, or soil quality.

Pollution harms biodiversity in numerous ways—chemicals can poison wildlife, plastic waste entangles and kills marine animals, and contaminated water disrupts aquatic ecosystems. Air pollution contributes to respiratory problems in animals and damages plant life, while soil pollution affects microorganisms and plants that form the base of food chains.

Sports can be a source of pollution in several ways. Large-scale events generate significant waste, including plastics, food packaging,

and discarded materials, much of which may end up in landfills or waterways. Maintenance of sports fields or facilities often involves the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and chemicals, which can runoff into nearby ecosystems, contaminating soil and water. Transport emissions from fans, teams, and equipment traveling to events add to air pollution, while noise pollution from events can disrupt nearby wildlife.



Invasive Species

Invasive species are non-native organisms introduced to new environments where they outcompete or prey on local species, disrupting ecosystems and reducing biodiversity. They are often introduced unintentionally and can spread rapidly, consuming resources, spreading disease, or preying on native species, which may not have evolved defences against them. For instance, invasive plants can dominate landscapes, altering habitats and reducing food availability for local wildlife. These changes can ripple through ecosystems, destabilising entire food chains.

Sports can inadvertently contribute to the spread of invasive species. International sporting events often involve transporting equipment, materials, and people across borders, increasing the risk of unintentionally introducing non-native species. For instance, aquatic sports may transport invasive organisms via boats or gear that is not properly cleaned. Similarly, using imported materials, like turf or landscaping plants, for sports facilities can introduce invasive species that outcompete native flora.



Overexploitation of Resources

Overexploitation happens when natural resources are used faster than they can regenerate. This can result from overfishing, hunting, logging, or excessive water extraction. Overexploitation disrupts ecosystems by reducing populations of key species, which often play vital roles in maintaining ecological balance.

Sports can drive overexploitation in subtle but impactful ways. For example, the demand for natural materials like wood for sports equipment or synthetic turf often places pressure on forests or other resources. Additionally, water-intensive sports facilities, such as golf courses or swimming pools, may rely heavily on local water supplies, potentially depleting resources needed by nearby ecosystems. Wildlife disturbance from sports events or activities in natural settings can also lead to overexploitation, as species may be forced to relocate or compete for dwindling resources.



Climate Change

Climate change refers to long-term alterations in global weather patterns, largely driven by human activities like burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes. The resulting increase in greenhouse gas concentrations leads to rising temperatures, melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and more frequent extreme weather events. These changes disrupt ecosystems by shifting habitats, altering migration patterns, and threatening species that cannot adapt quickly enough. Coral reefs, for example, are bleaching due to warming seas, while polar animals struggle to find food as ice caps melt.

Sports can contribute to climate change through energy-intensive facilities, extensive travel for competitions and events, and high resource consumption. Sports venues powered by non-renewable energy add to greenhouse gas emissions, while large-scale events that require international travel by teams, fans, and equipment have a significant carbon footprint. Outdoor sports are particularly vulnerable to climate change, as rising temperatures and extreme weather may alter or damage the natural environments where events take place.



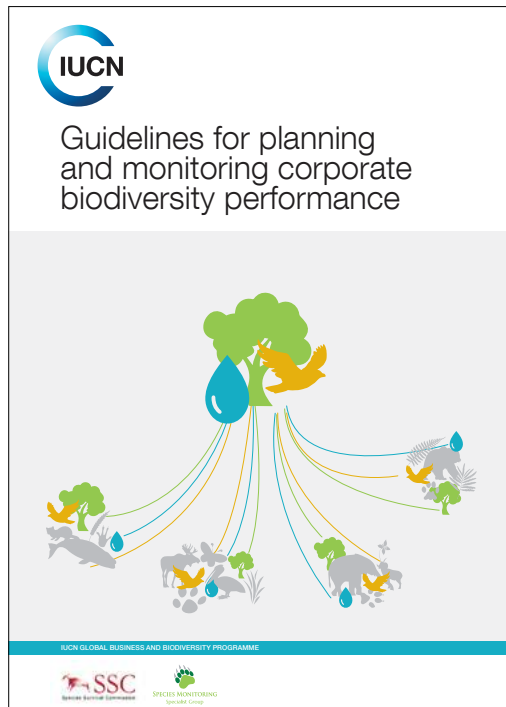
1.6 Getting started: Working on Nature

Unless you define what exactly it means to your organisation to work on nature, it will be very difficult to turn this intention into reality, and to know the real impact of your actions.

Therefore, your aim should be to develop a biodiversity strategy with goals, objectives and indicators to manage and monitor the biodiversity impacts and dependencies associated with your operations and/or events

1.7 Methodology

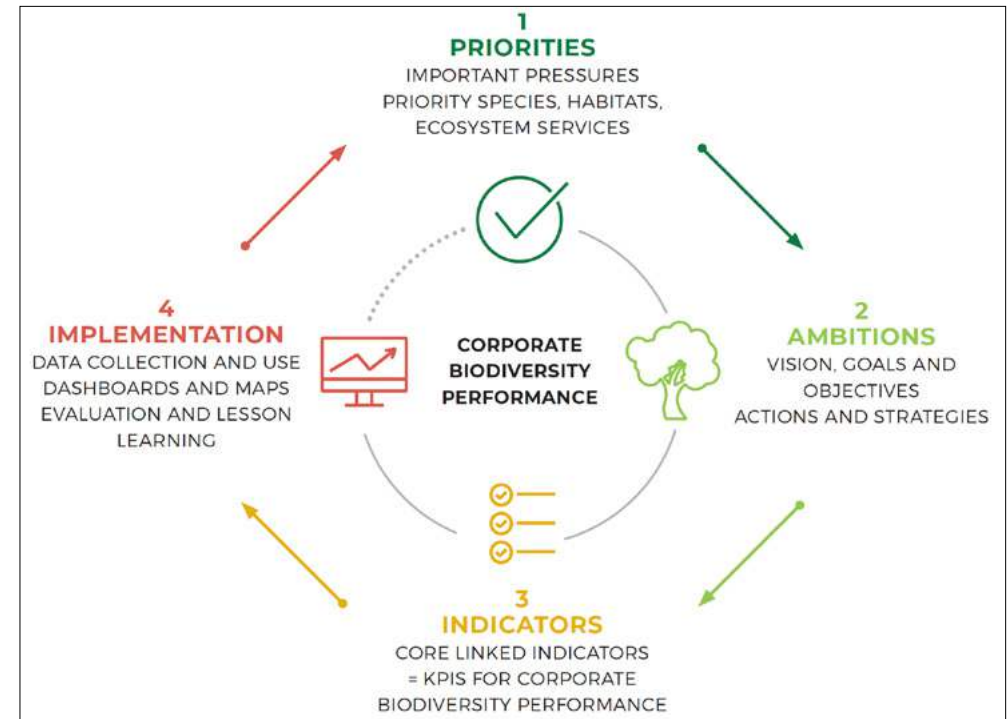
This Guide is based on the [IUCN Guidelines for planning and monitoring corporate biodiversity performance](#).



Stephenson, P.J. and Carbone, G. (2021). Guidelines for planning and monitoring corporate biodiversity performance. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.

The Guidelines feature four stages that are outlined in the image below.

This Guide focuses on **Stage 1 – identifying an organisation's priorities for nature**.



Source: Stephenson, P.J. and Carbone, G. (2021).

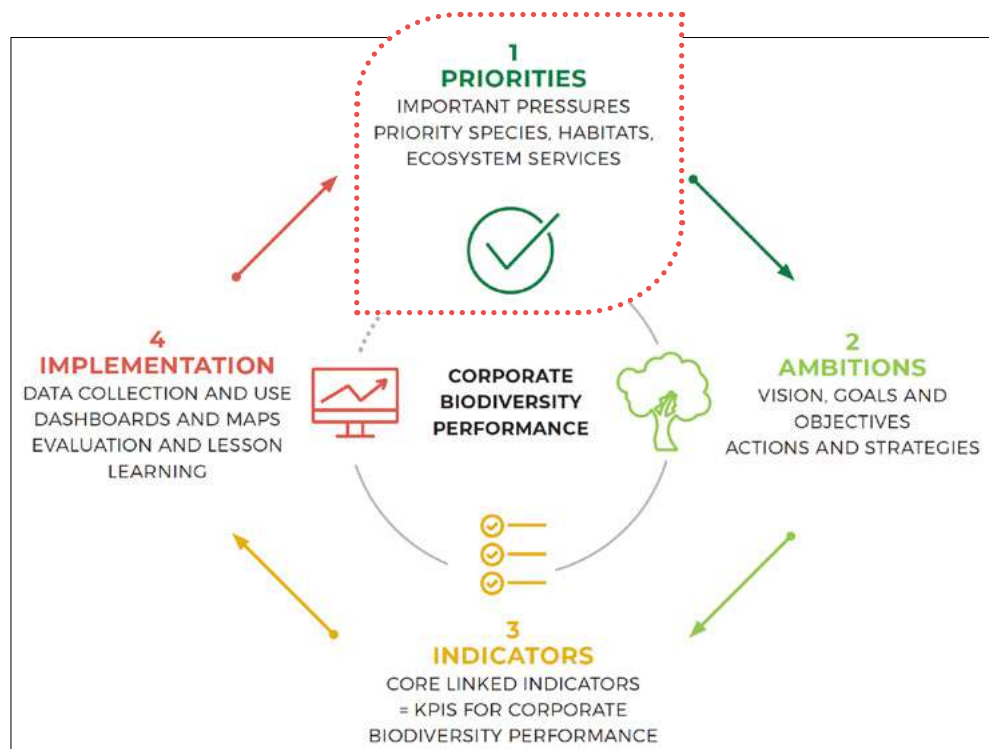
1.8 Identifying Priorities

Mapping your relationship with nature is the first step on your journey towards developing a biodiversity strategy.



It will help you identify the species, habitats, and ecosystem services that are most relevant to your organisation.

Future Sports for Nature resources will follow to support you in developing and implementing your biodiversity objectives.



Source: Stephenson, P.J. and Carbone, G. (2021).

1.9 Additional Information

Protected Areas are clearly defined geographical spaces that are recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. They can include spaces such as national parks, community conserved areas, World Heritage sites, and wilderness areas. Protected Areas play a crucial role in helping conserve the world's biodiversity.

Key Biodiversity Areas are sites of global importance for the planet's overall health and the persistence of biodiversity. They are nationally-identified areas that constitute the most important places for biodiversity in the world. In this analysis, reference to "areas of importance for biodiversity" includes both Protected Areas and Key Biodiversity Areas.

Natural World Heritage sites are recognised in the World Heritage Convention and include the planet's most outstanding natural heritage, protecting around 3,500,000 km² (more than the size of India) in over 250 sites across more than 100 countries.

Other effective area-based conservation measures' (OECMs) are areas outside of protected zones that effectively and sustainably conserve biodiversity in the long term.



**Mapping your
relationship
with nature**



2.1 What kind of activities is your organisation undertaking and how are they connected to nature?

STEP 1 Map the Scope of Your organisations' Influence on Biodiversity



Use the Excel sheet to make this task easier

1.1 List your organisation's main activities.

1.3 Specify whether these activities form part of your "core" or "supporting" activities.

The activities could include:

1. (Sports) venues and facilities: The construction, maintenance, and operations of stadiums, training grounds, and arenas as well as offices.
2. Event operations: The environmental impact of organising events, such as energy and water use, waste management, and transportation for teams, staff, and spectators.
3. Supply chains: The sourcing of equipment, merchandise, uniforms, food, and services required for operations.
4. Travel and logistics: Team and fan travel, as well as transport of goods and materials for events and general operations.
5. Fan engagement and post-event activities: fan participation and how these are managed post-event.
6. Education and Awareness: Programmes and campaigns aimed at educating athletes, staff, and fans about environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

Hypothetical Example: IUCN Football Club

#	Activity	Category of Activity	Level of Control	Core vs Supporting Activities
1	First-team training	Direct Sport Activity / Practice of the sport	3	Core
2	Constructing new training facilities	Sports Venues and Facilities	2	Supporting
3	Organizing large-scale sports events	Event Operations	2	Core
4	Catering and hospitality services	Supply Chain	2	Supporting
5	Arranging a bus transfer	Travel and Logistics	2	Supporting
6	Outreach to fans of the club	Fan Engagement	3	Supporting
7	Stadium Clean-Up	Post Event Activities	2	Supporting
8	Developing a campaign	Education and Awareness	3	Supporting
9	Fan merchandise production and retail	Marketing	3	Supporting
10	Issuing a press release	Communications	2	Supporting

STEP 2 Identify the possible impacts and pressures associated with your operations and events

2.1 For each activity think about its possible impact on nature. These can be positive as well as negative impacts.



Changes in the use of land, sea or water



Pollution



Invasive Species



Overexploitation of Resources



Climate Change



Das Omnis/Unapash

Hypothetical Example: IUCN Football Club

#	Activity	Possible Impact on Biodiversity	Associated Biodiversity Pressure Category
1	First-team training	High water usage for pitch irrigation, energy use for gym equipment.	Overexploitation of Resources
2	Constructing new training facilities	Deforestation, land conversion, high carbon footprint.	Changes in the Use of Land, Sea, or Water
3	Organizing large-scale sports events	High energy consumption, spread of invasive species, pollution,	Invasive Species
4	Catering and hospitality services	Food waste, unsustainable farming practices; single-use plastic pollution;	Overexploitation of Resources
5	Arranging a bus transfer	Greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change, which affects habitats and species.	Climate Change
6	Outreach to fans of the club	Awareness campaigns on sustainability can have positive long-term effects.	Overexploitation of Resources
7	Stadium Clean-Up	If not properly managed, waste can end up in landfills or natural environments, harming wildlife	Pollution
8	Developing a campaign	Excessive use of non-recyclable materials in promotional campaigns may lead to waste affecting natural habitats.	Pollution
9	Fan merchandise production and retail	High resource consumption in clothing production.	Invasive Species
10	Issuing a press release	Opportunity to communicate the club's nature engagement to a broad audience	n/a - not applicable

STEP 3 Rating scope & severity

3.1 Rate each activity based on its scope and severity: High (3) Medium (2) Low (1)

- 1. Pressure's Scope:** how widespread or common a particular impact is across your organisation's activities. Instead of looking at the actual harm caused, it focuses on how much of your organisation's operations are involved in creating this pressure on nature.
- 2. Pressure's Severity:** how serious the impact of the pressure is in the areas it affects. It's about the level of damage to nature—how much harm is done to species, habitats, or essential natural services like clean water or air.



S.H. P. attention

Hypothetical Example: IUCN Football Club

#	Activity	Pressure Scope	Pressure Severity
1	First-team training	2	1
2	Constructing new training facilities	2	3
3	Organizing large-scale sports events	2	2
4	Catering and hospitality services	2	2
5	Arranging a bus transfer	1	1
6	Outreach to fans of the club	1	1
7	Stadium Clean-Up	1	1
8	Developing a campaign	2	2
9	Fan merchandise production and retail	3	3
10	Issuing a press release	2	2

STEP 4 Prioritise

4.1 Prioritise - identify the most important activities in terms of biodiversity pressures (the accompanying excel sheet will do this automatically for you)

In general, you will want to address high priority and moderate priority pressures.

Where the pressure is of very high or high importance, but the organisation has limited control, you will need to review your operations and rethink your strategy.

		Degree of control			
		High (3)	Moderate (2)	Low (1)	None (0)
Importance (Scope + severity)	Very High	High priority pressures against which to identify suitable goals and objectives		Review operations urgently (and set short-term objectives to improve control or reduce pressures)	
	High				
	Moderate	Moderate priority pressures		Low priority pressures	
	Low	Low priority pressures			

Source: Stephenson, P.J. and Carbone, G. (2021).

Hypothetical Example: IUCN Football Club

#	Activity	Pressure Scope	Pressure Severity	Importance / Level of Priority
1	First-team training	2	1	3
2	Constructing new training facilities	2	3	5
3	Organizing large-scale sports events	2	2	4
4	Catering and hospitality services	2	2	4
5	Arranging a bus transfer	1	1	2
6	Outreach to fans of the club	1	1	2
7	Stadium Clean-Up	1	1	2
8	Developing a campaign	2	2	4
9	Fan merchandise production and retail	3	3	6
10	Issuing a press release	2	2	4



2.2 Where are your organisation's activities taking place?

Go local

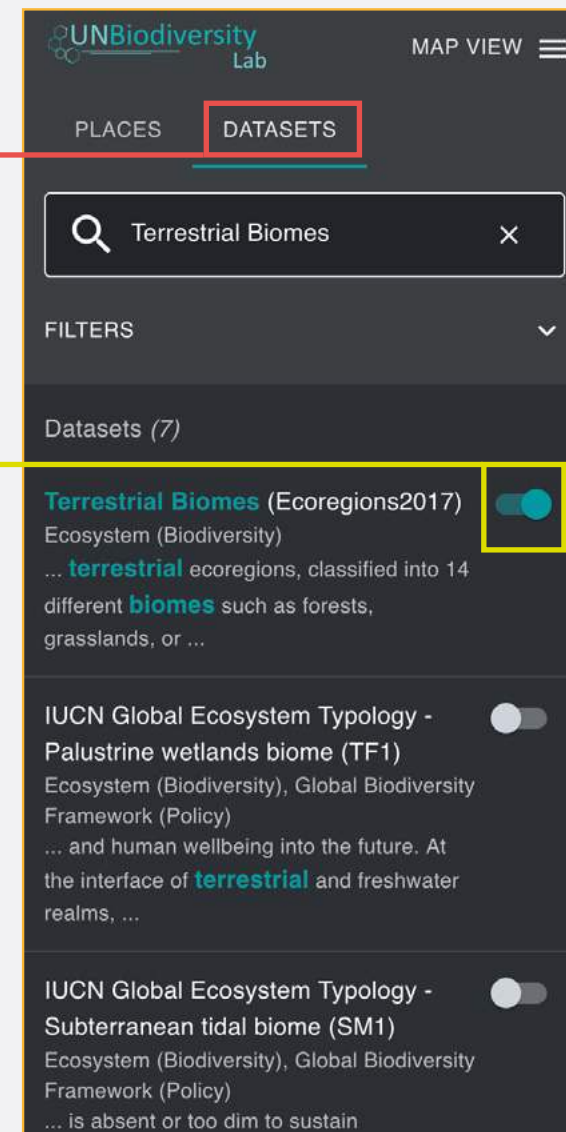
→ **Identify** *where* your activities triggering high and moderate priority pressures are located and generate spatial information related to those activities.

- The more specific the location information is, the more precise you can be about the species, habitats and ecosystem services that could be used to define your goals, objectives, strategies and indicators.

SITE
IDENTIFICATION

1 Ecoregion

- Access the UN Biodiversity Lab map page (<https://map.unbiodiversitylab.org/earth>)
- On the map, zoom in to the location you want to study.
- Under "DATASETS", select "Terrestrial Biomes (Ecoregions2017)" and note down what ecoregion(s) covers your site.

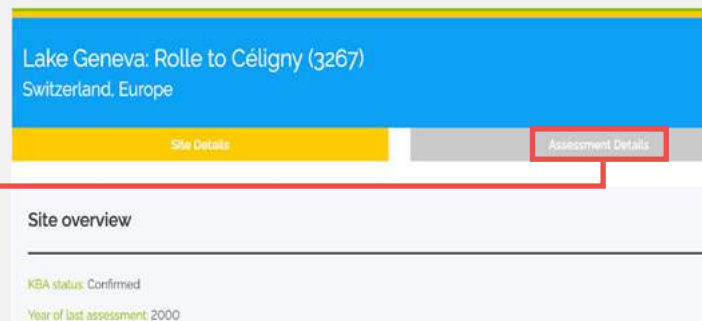
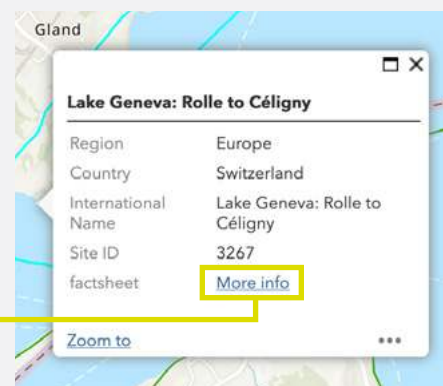
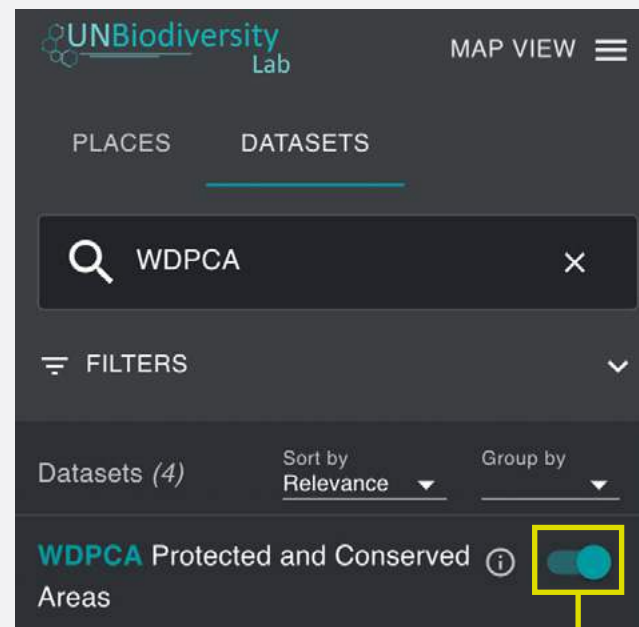


2 Protected Areas

- Close the biomes dataset and open the dataset “WDPCA Protected & Conserved Areas”.
- Click on the nearest protected area to your site to identify its name and how large it is (km²).
- You can view an instruction [video here](#).

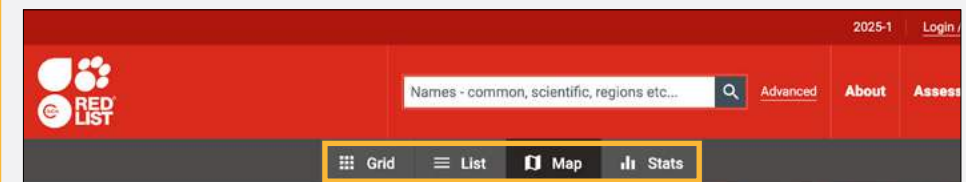
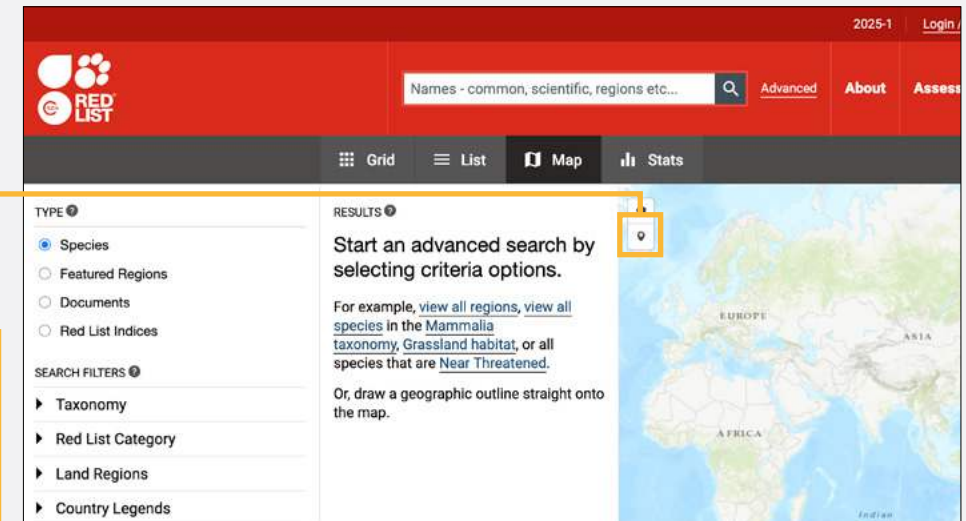
3 Key Biodiversity Areas & Threatened Species

- Access the “Key Biodiversity Areas” page (<https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/en/sites?view=map>) and use their map to find the KBA nearest to your site.
- Click on it to identify its name. Click on “more info” to get a detailed factsheet
- Click on “Assessment Details” to access a list of threatened species in the area.
- To learn more about these species, enter their names into the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>



Learn about Local Species

- Access the “IUCN Red List of Threatened Species” <https://www.iucnredlist.org/search/map> and zoom into the location you want to study
- Place the **marker** onto the desired map location. This will give you search results of species within a 25km buffer area.
- Now access the four different buttons: **“Grid”, “List”, “Map”, “Stats”**
 - **“Grid”** and **“List”** will give you an overview of the species in the area and whether they are threatened. Click on the individual species to learn more about them.
 - **“Map”** will bring you back to the marker you placed on the map.
 - Click on **“Stats”** to access more data including a list of the key threats to species in the selected location.
- You can view an [instruction video here](#).



BONUS

Access their [map of observations](#) and zoom in on your site to see what kinds of species have been spotted in your location. Maybe you'd like to upload your own observations as well?



Ecoregion: Temperate Broadleaf & Mixed Forests



Red List category

Legend:

- EX - Extinct
- EW - Extinct in The Wild
- RE - Regionally Extinct (regional category)
- CR - Critically Endangered
- EN - Endangered
- VU - Vulnerable
- LR/lcd - Lower Risk, Conservation Dependent
- LR/nt - Lower Risk, Near Threatened
- LC or LR/lc - Least Concern
- DD - Data Deficient
- NA - Not Applicable (regional category)

Donut Chart Data (Species):

Category	Count
LC or LR/lc	7
DD	1
EN	2
VU	1
NT or LR/nt	1
CR	1
EW	0
RE	0
EX	0
LR/lcd	0

Threats

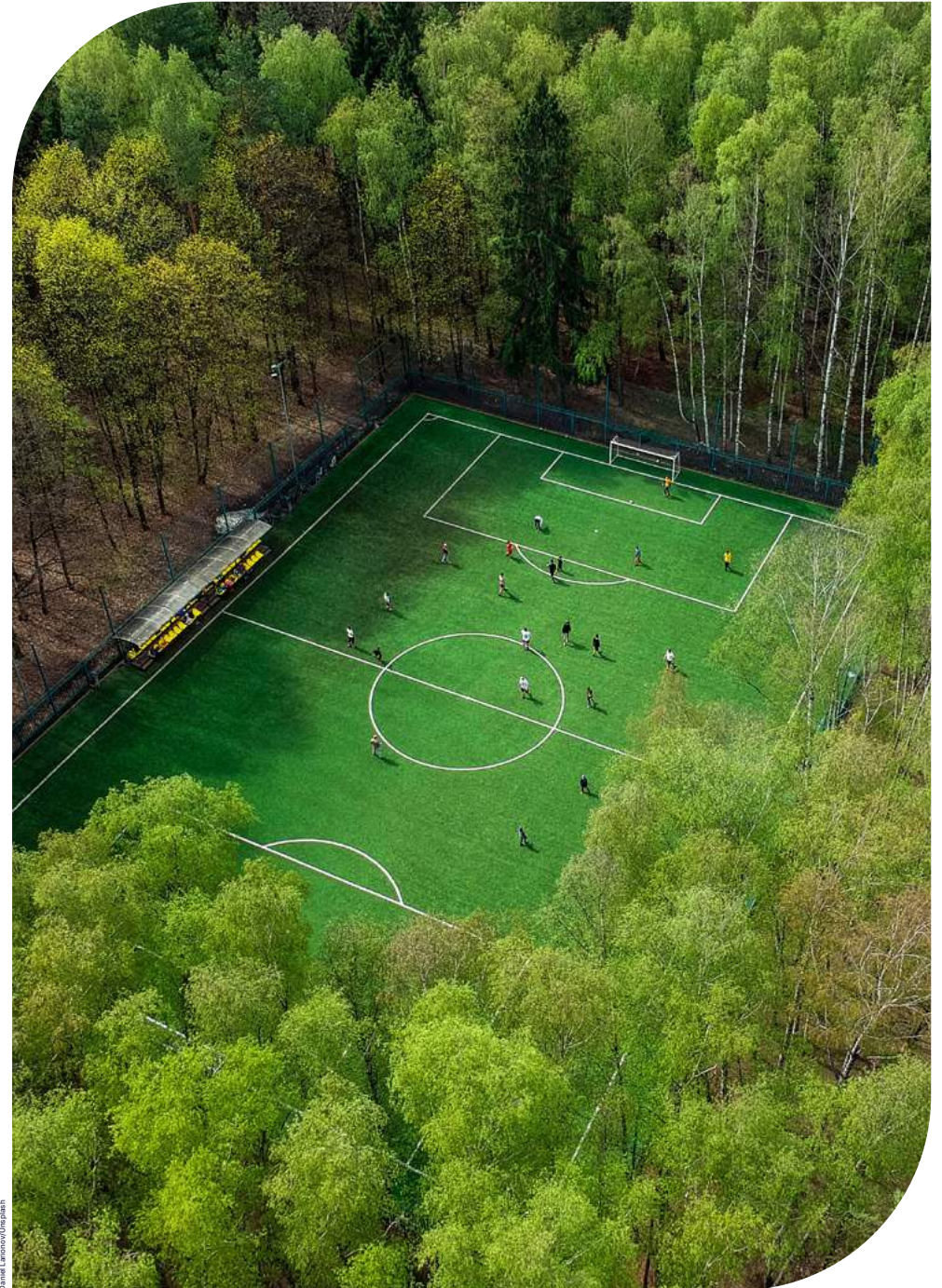
Bar Chart Data (Number of Species):

Threat	Number of Species
2.1 Other categories	13
1.1 Hunting & collection	11
2.2 Inhabitation and agriculture	11
1.1 Inhabitation and agriculture	10
2.1.1 Inhabitation	10
2.1.2 Agriculture	9
1.2 Pollution & contamination	7
2.2.1 Pollution & contamination	6
2.2.2 Agriculture	6
1.2.1 Pollution & contamination	5
1.2.2 Agriculture	5

Well done!

We hope that this self-assessment tool helped you identify your organisation's key connections to nature!

If you have any questions about your assessment and/or feedback on the tool itself, please do not hesitate to reach out the Sports for Nature team at team@sportsfornature.org.



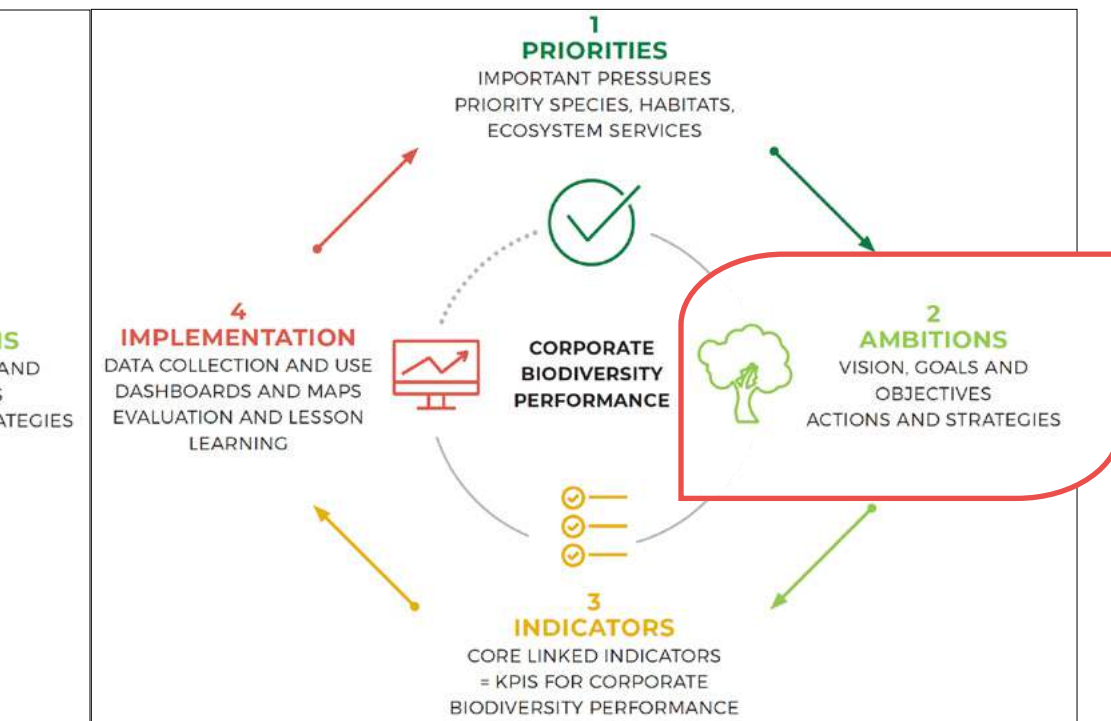
Daniel Lachonvi/Unsplash



Outlook

Sports for Nature will produce additional resources to support your work on nature.

If you want to continue with the methodology of the [IUCN Guidelines for planning and monitoring corporate biodiversity performance](#), you can now start stage 2.



You can access existing Sports for Nature resources to find examples of positive actions for nature.



S4N Principle 1 Factsheet



S4N Principle 2 Factsheet



S4N Principle 3 Factsheet



S4N Principle 4 Factsheet



Managing Sport Events for Nature



Sports for Nature Urban Playbook



Sports for Nature Sourcing Framework



Founding partners



International
Olympic
Committee



Convention on
Biological Diversity



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