



# SUSTAIN

Strengthening Understanding  
and Strategies of Business to  
Assess and Integrate Nature

## Overview of SUSTAIN project outputs: Business sector

28 February 2026

Deliverable D6.5 – Public presentation materials relating to the project



Develop and disseminate business case materials.  
Engage with key stakeholders from the business, finance, regulatory and intergovernmental spheres

Provide an enhanced knowledge base on impacts and dependencies of economic activities on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Develop methods to reduce biodiversity and ecosystem service-related risks and increase opportunities through innovative research and modelling techniques

Develop a toolbox for businesses and financial institutions to use to understand, assess, measure and monitor impacts and dependencies on biodiversity

Every business, at its core, is a subsidiary of nature. From direct operations to complex supply chains, our global economy relies on healthy, biodiverse ecosystems to function. However, we depend on these systems while simultaneously driving their degradation. To "bend the curve" of biodiversity loss, we need more than just awareness. **We need a systemic shift toward a nature positive economy.**

While the business case for protecting biodiversity is gaining traction in some sectors, others are still lagging behind. **This is where SUSTAIN has bridged the gap.** By strengthening the global understanding of how economic activities both impact and depend on the natural world, SUSTAIN **has helped transform biodiversity from a "niche concern" into a core pillar of strategic decision-making.**

Through a multi-disciplinary approach, SUSTAIN has worked with businesses, financial institutions and regulatory bodies and helped them to understand how their impacts and dependencies on nature affect their operations and profits through capacity building and the provision of tools and technical skills needed to comprehensively integrate the value of nature into their decision-making.



The project has brought together a multi-disciplinary team of leading experts with backgrounds in ecology, conservation, economics, social sciences, and academic research.

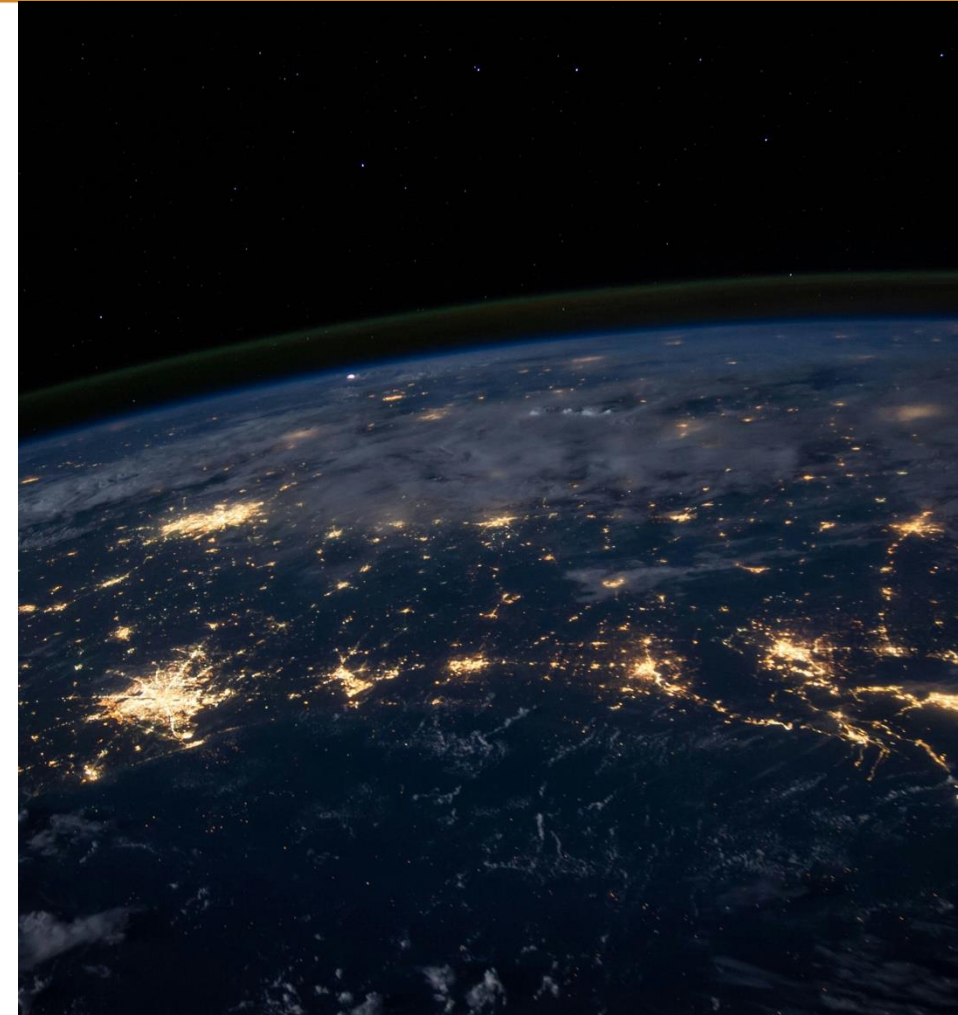
## Together they sought to:

- Provide an enhanced knowledge base on potential impacts and dependencies of economic activities on biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Develop methods to reduce biodiversity and ecosystem service-related risks and increase opportunities through innovative research and modelling techniques
- Develop a toolbox for businesses and financial institutions to use to understand, assess, measure and monitor impacts and dependencies on biodiversity
- Develop and disseminate business case materials
- Engage with key stakeholders from the business, finance, regulatory and intergovernmental spheres

This slide deck provides a comprehensive overview of all SUSTAIN's outputs that are relevant for businesses.

It follows a logical progression designed to turn insight into impact:

- **Inspiration** to spark a vision for what is possible
- followed by **Screening** to identify material risks and opportunities
- this leads into a technical **Deep-dive**
- ultimately culminating in the tools and frameworks necessary for concrete **Action**



## Thought Paper

Led by NatureSquared

The current 'rules of the game' must be reformed and transformed to push economic systems towards being in harmony with nature and contributing to halting of biodiversity loss.

Together with the publication of case studies and blueprints, businesses, financial institutions and regulatory bodies can also refer to the [Thought Paper Changing the rules of the game](#) that can help them understand how their impacts and dependencies on nature affect their operations and profits.

### Key findings and recommendations:

- To achieve Nature Positive, nature harmful policies and incentives need to be eliminated or reformed, and a paradigm shift is needed from Do No Harm to Nature Positive, both in policy ambition and business action.
- The business and financial communities have demonstrated proof of concept for approaches that contribute to shifting towards a Nature Positive future, policymakers must now break the deadlock of the Triangle of Inaction to shape this future by changing the rules of the game and mainstreaming Nature Positive across policy aims.



## Case studies

Led by ShareAction, WBCSD & Capitals Coalition

All businesses depend and impact on nature, whether through their direct operations or their value chains. This means that every sector is exposed to nature risk, either directly or indirectly.

### Business

3 insightful sectoral case studies of [agri-food](#), [built environment](#) and [energy systems](#), highlight practical insights around how companies are identifying and assessing their nature-related issues, building upon established frameworks and guidelines (such as the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) LEAP (Locate, Evaluate, Assess, Prepare) approach, the Roadmaps to Nature Positive, etc.) as well as the essential role the systems they operate in play, to contribute to the global goal for nature.

Each document aligns with the High-level Business Actions on Nature to Assess, Commit, Transform, and Disclose (ACT-D) framework, emphasizing the importance of the initial step, Assess. This focus helps companies address nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks, and opportunities (DIROs) systematically, setting them on a path to contribute to the global goal for nature: to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 and achieve full recovery by 2050.

## Business Briefing

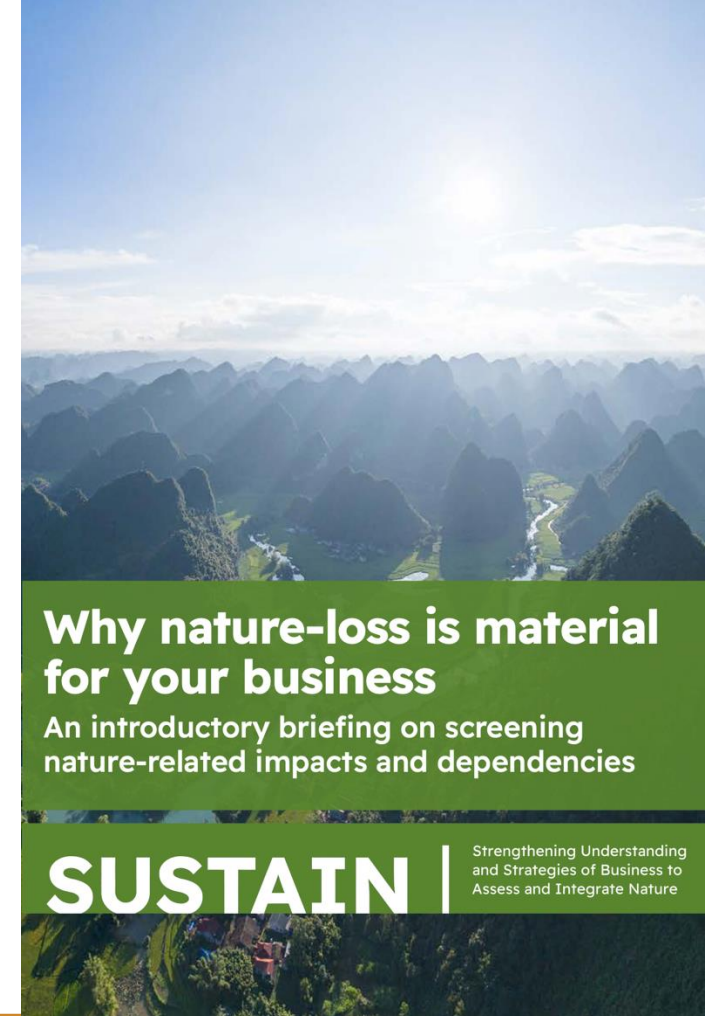
Led by ShareAction, WBCSD & Capitals Coalition

This [briefing](#) aims to strengthen businesses' understanding of the need to first screen for potentially material nature-related issues, using available tools and in discussion with relevant stakeholders, and then to undertake further assessment and action to halt and reverse nature loss.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. Apply materiality screening, to identify potential nature-related issues (dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities)
2. Meaningfully engage relevant stakeholders and rightsholders to discuss all relevant nature-related issues and inform thresholds for materiality of potential risks
3. Further assess potential and prioritize actual material nature-related issues
4. Use assessment results to inform strategy and actions.

This briefing is especially for non-nature experts in businesses who:  
are not yet identifying nature as material  
understand that nature might be material, but don't know how to get started  
have started using some tools like ENCORE but need more guidance on how to use them



**Why nature-loss is material for your business**

An introductory briefing on screening nature-related impacts and dependencies

**SUSTAIN** | Strengthening Understanding and Strategies of Business to Assess and Integrate Nature

## Business Briefing Quick Guide

**Why nature-loss is material for your business**  
Quick guide

Strengthening Understanding and Strategies of Business to Assess and Integrate Nature



### Why assess and act on nature as a business

Each business directly or indirectly depends on and impacts natural capital, and is reliant on healthy and resilient ecosystems for business continuity.

Nature loss and climate change are two sides of the same coin, forming the bedrock of the environmental resilience of your organisation.

Your activities and value chain are linked to ecosystem state and resilience, with nature loss posing potential value chain shocks and financial risks that can impact your business performance.

Assessing your company's nature-related impacts and risks will help identify areas of action, attention and vulnerability within your direct activities and value chain.

### Key Recommendations

- 1 Screen for your nature impact and dependency**  
Screen for the potential impacts and dependencies of your business based on the economic activities in your direct operations and value chain using available tools and datasets, and subject matter experts.
- 2 Consult on identified nature-related issues**  
Map and consult key stakeholders to validate nature screening results and approach, and create a list of priority issues and opportunities to refine the nature assessment.
- 3 Deepen your assessment**  
Based on previous outputs, conduct a nature impact assessment to gain in-depth results based on the activities in your value chain to identify the areas with the greatest impact and dependency on nature.
- 4 Inform strategy and action**  
For a credible and impactful approach on nature, your company should develop and implement targets, actions and disclosures to address the most material issues you have identified in the assessment phase.

### Key Recommendations: Outputs

- 1** A "long" list of dependencies and impacts for further assessment and analysis.
- 2**
  - List of prioritized issues for further assessment
  - Topics of engagement with key stakeholders (through an ongoing process).
- 3** An overview across business activities of the most material nature-related impacts, dependencies, risks and opportunities for further action.
- 4** A roadmap and transition plan to systematically address material nature-related issues.

### HOW TO Screen for your nature impact and dependency

Set up a broad overview of your entire business and value chain, and:

- Screen your activities with available tools (such as ENCORE) to identify potentially material impacts and dependencies.

### HOW TO Consult on identified nature-related issues

Build upon screening outcomes through a double materiality assessment to:

- Map and engage with key stakeholders and (internal subject matter experts) to inform and validate your findings from the screening.
- Develop an overview of further prioritised issues along your operations and value chain considering materiality thresholds and potential risks.

### HOW TO Deepen your assessment

Conduct a more detailed assessment in priority parts of your business by:

- Collect primary and secondary data from priority locations.
- Analyse the data and conduct a further impact and financial materiality assessment following guidance by frameworks.

### HOW TO Inform your strategy and actions

Based on the outcomes of the previous steps, and:

- Outline actions you are already taking for priority issues (e.g. SBTN targets, certifications, water management).
- Identify and prioritize gaps for material impacts and dependencies.
- Identify and engage with stakeholders to increase success and impact.
- Report on your nature objectives, actions, targets, progress etc.

### Visit the SUSTAIN website to learn more about the tools and resources to get started.

Strengthening Understanding and Strategies of Business to Assess and Integrate Nature

## ENCORE

**ENCORE (Exploring Natural Capital Opportunities, Risks, and Exposure)** is a key tool that helps organisations explore their exposure to nature-related risk and take the first steps to understand their dependencies and impacts on nature. It is used by thousands of businesses, financial institutions and regulators across the globe and is recommended by leading initiatives such as TNFD.

As part of SUSTAIN, the knowledge base underpinning the ENCORE tool has been updated. This update included a **range of improvements** and was underpinned by the latest scientific research. ENCORE users benefit from more detailed data and improved functionalities to support their screening of potential dependencies and impacts across direct operations and value chains.

The updated knowledge base can be accessed through the **ENCORE website** or **downloaded** for offline analysis. More information on the updates can be found in the Explanatory Note, available in **English** and **Spanish**.

The ENCORE tool was developed and is maintained by the ENCORE Partnership, which includes Global Canopy, UNEP Finance Initiative and UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).



## ENCORE (continued)

### Key improvements made through SUSTAIN:

- Expansion of the previous list of 92 'production processes' to 271 'economic activities', catalogued by the globally recognised [International Standard Industrial Classification for All Economic Activities](#) (ISIC). These economic activities, ranging from livestock farming to the manufacture of chemicals and nuclear power production, offer a more detailed breakdown on economic sectors.
- The list of ecosystem services is now better aligned with the categorisation proposed by the UN's [System of Environmental Economic Accounting - Ecosystem Accounting](#). Cultural Ecosystem Services - such as recreation, aesthetic appeal, education, and spiritual, artistic and symbolic services - which were previously not included in ENCORE, have been added.
- Improved clarity on how economic activities can impact nature, enabling users to gain more actionable insights.
- Natural capital is now separated into different ecosystem types aligned with the [IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology 2.0](#). This will help users better understand how impacts and dependencies may vary based on where they are located.
- All data on impacts and dependencies of economic activities have been updated based on the latest scientific research, industry expert reviews and grey literature, such as company sustainability reports, organisations' websites and industry news.
- Improved methodology of the materiality ratings (which indicate how significant potential dependencies are, and how much pressure economic activities have on nature) to enable comparisons across economic activities and sectors. Where possible, these materiality ratings draw on quantitative indicators.
- New information has been added on key value chain links covering two tiers of suppliers and two tiers of consumers for each economic activity, enabling users to see their indirect nature-related impacts and dependencies.
- The updates, particularly the qualitative descriptions, the value chain links and the materiality ratings, have been reviewed by 78 industry experts representing 14 out of the 21 ISIC sections (level 1).

For more information, see [ENCORE website](#).

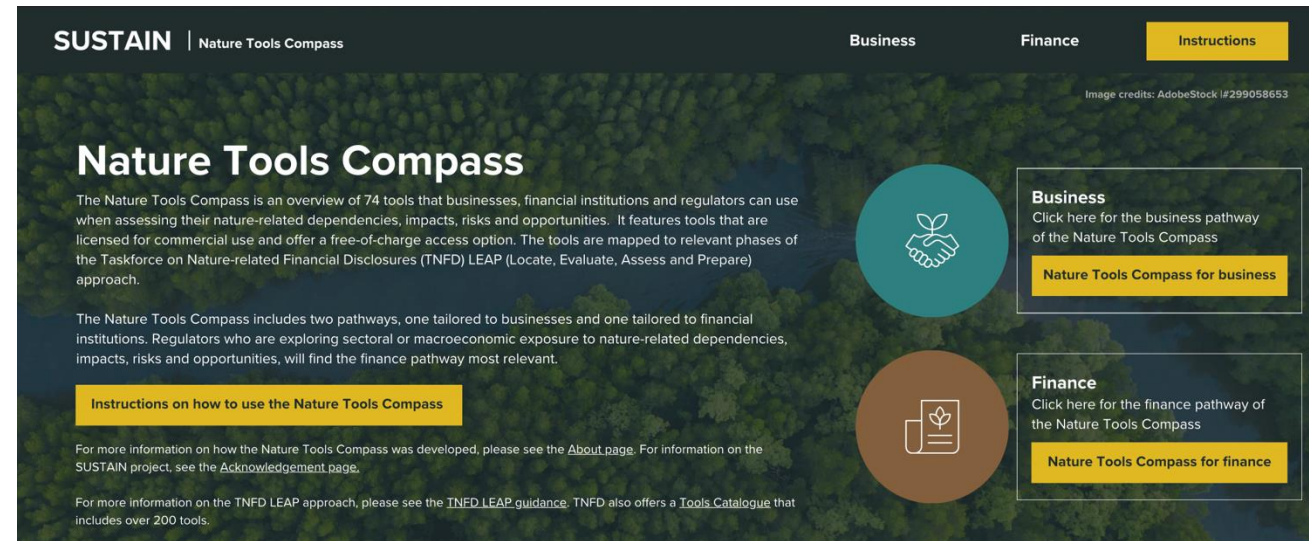
## Nature Tools Compass

Led by UNEP-WCMC

Businesses, financial institutions and regulators are increasingly taking measures to better understand nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities. Choosing the right tools to support a nature assessment can, however, be challenging.

The [Nature Tools Compass](#) addresses this challenge by providing an overview of over 70 tools and recommendations on how they can be helpful in different phases of nature assessment. The Nature Tools Compass provides two tailored pathways:

- business pathway, designed for corporate nature assessments.
- finance pathway, designed for financial institutions and also relevant for regulators assessing sectoral or macroeconomic exposure to nature-related risks and opportunities.



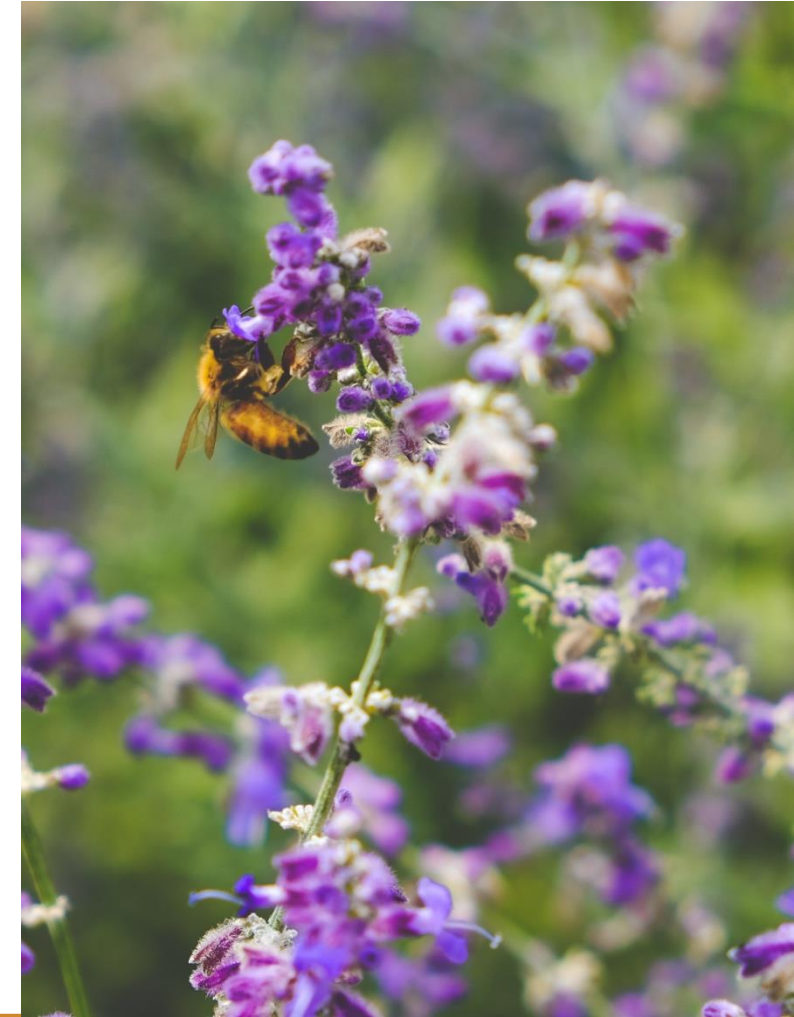
All tools included are licensed for commercial use and offer a free-of-charge access option. Each tool is mapped to the relevant phases and components of the LEAP approach developed by TNFD.

## Inventory of nature impact reduction strategies

As scientific evidence of nature's rapid decline continues to mount, an inventory of nature impact reduction strategies was developed for businesses across the agriculture, energy, and built environment sector to help mitigate their impacts on nature. Building on existing guidance from the Science Based Targets Network, the [inventory provides a diverse and non-exhaustive list of options](#) businesses could consider as a starting point for addressing their nature-related pressures identified by the ENCORE tool. These pressures range from noise disturbances, water quality issues, the spread of invasive species, land-use change to nutrient pollution.

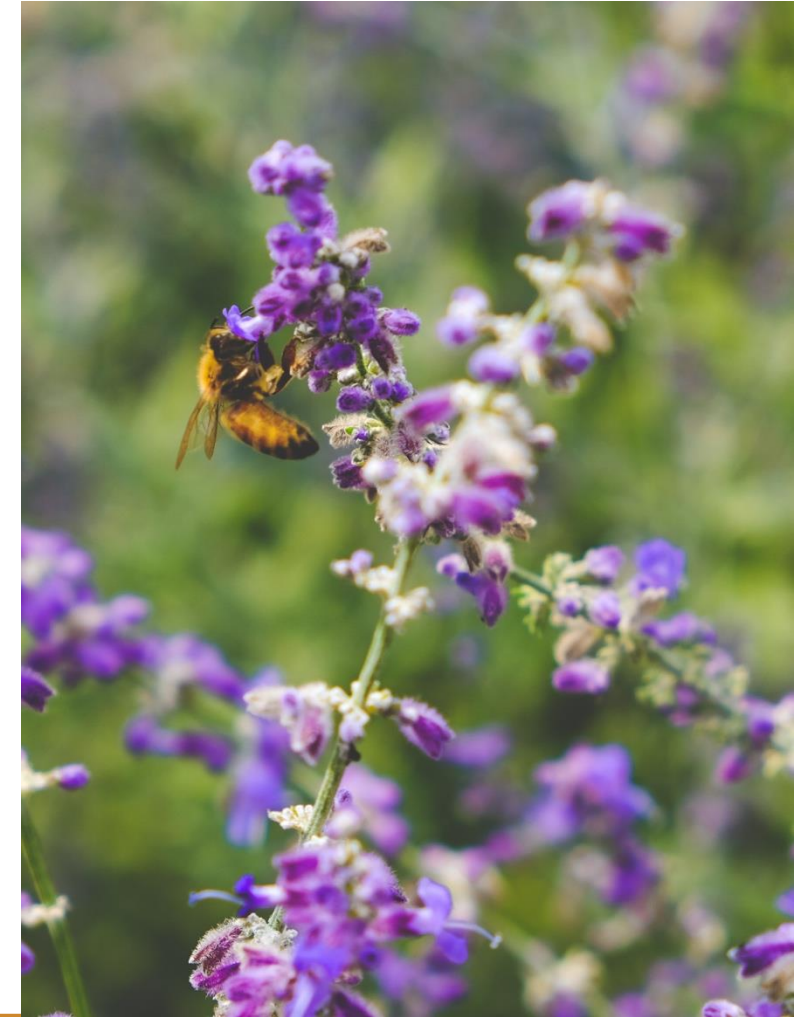
The inventory aligns with the well-established High-Level Business Actions on Nature: Assess, Commit, Transform, and Disclose (ACT-D) framework by providing support for businesses in the 'Transform' phase of revising their business strategy and models.

Focusing on high-impact sectors, the inventory outlines over 150 response options across different stages of the value chain. Businesses can use this to consider options for both their direct operations and for engaging with upstream and downstream stakeholders to address nature-related impacts through coordinated action.



## Inventory of nature impact reduction strategies

- **For agriculture:** it addresses both animal and crop production across the entire supply chain, from on farm-level practices to broader systemic interventions. This includes a range of options from diversifying feed sources to alleviate pressures on water and land resources, adopting circular agricultural practices to improve resource efficiency and reduce waste and utilising certification schemes that help limit deforestation and minimise land-use change.
- **For energy:** it covers response options for different types of fossil fuel and renewable energy production including solar, wind and hydropower. It covers a broad spectrum of options, ranging from designating “no-go” zones to mitigate mining and quarrying impacts, to specific operational practices that could improve water quality and toxic pollutant emissions.
- **For built environment:** it includes a range of possible options spanning the entire lifecycle of buildings and related infrastructure from minimising the impacts on nature caused by material extraction to mitigating construction effects and improving waste management.



Stakeholder Briefing:  
Business

Business Case Study  
Agri-Food

Business Case Study  
Built Environment

Business Case Study  
Energy Systems

Thought Paper

SUSTAIN Webpage

ENCORE

Nature Tools Compass

Inventory of nature  
impact reduction  
strategies

Colour coding:

General

Business

Finance

Regulators

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**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

The SUSTAIN project is funded by European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation program under grant agreement No 101060320, the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantees 10075763, 10038461 and 10046192.

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**UK Research  
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**Project funded by**



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