



SCIENCE FOR POLICY BRIEF

The European Commission's Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity



State of play and future steps for the EU Biodiversity Strategy (EU BDS) dashboard

April 2024 update

HIGHLIGHTS

- The EU BDS dashboard is publicly accessible through the [website of the European Commission's Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity \(KCBD\)](#) under "Tools".
- Following the publication of six new indicators, the EU BDS dashboard currently contains 16 indicators to monitor progress on 8 out of the 16 EU BDS targets.
- The EU BDS dashboard has also undergone technical updates to make it easier to navigate and maintain.
- The two indicators selected following the last meeting of the EU Biodiversity Platform's Monitoring and Assessment subgroup (EUBP-MA) are planned to be published by the end of 2024, as well as the two pesticide indicators previously proposed.
- Two new indicators are proposed to be added in the EU BDS dashboard: EUBP-MA is invited to give its feedback on these proposed indicators.
- The indicator developed to track progress on the EU BDS commitment to unlock at least € 20 billion/year for biodiversity is also presented and open to EUBP-MA feedback.

State of play of the EU BDS dashboard

The EU BDS dashboard is the Commission's official tool to monitor progress towards the EU BDS targets. Following the recent publication of six new indicators, it currently contains 16 indicators to monitor progress

on 8 out of the 16 EU BDS targets (Table 1). It has also undergone technical updates that make it easier to navigate for the end user, and easier to update for the JRC team of KCBD maintaining it. Following consultation during the last EUBP-MA meeting in September 2023 and presentation during the last

Table 1. List of the EU BDS targets and the corresponding indicators (identified to be) used in the EU BDS dashboard. Those already used in the EU BDS dashboard are shown in **green font**, those selected to be added by the end of 2024 are shown in **light green font**, those proposed to be added are in **orange font**, and the other identified indicators (placeholders or on hold) are in **black font**. The text into brackets refers to the indicator provider (EEA = European Environment Agency, ESTAT = Eurostat, JRC = Joint Research Centre).

| Targets | Indicators (provider) | Next steps and comments |
|--|--|---|
| <u>1 - Legally protect a minimum of 30% of the EU's land area and a minimum of 30% of the EU's sea area, and integrate ecological corridors, as part of a true Trans-European Nature Network</u> | <p>Terrestrial protected area coverage (EEA)</p> <p>Natura 2000 terrestrial protected area coverage (EEA)</p> <p>Nationally designated terrestrial protected area coverage (EEA)</p> <p>Marine protected area coverage (EEA)</p> <p>Natura 2000 marine protected area coverage (EEA)</p> <p>Nationally designated marine protected area coverage (EEA)</p> <p>Natural area connectivity on land (JRC)</p> <p>PLACEHOLDER - Representativeness of the protected areas network expressed as the mean target achievement (based on NaturaConnect and MPA Europe projects)</p> | Collect the feedback of EUBP-MA on the proposed indicator and follow up the development of the representativeness indicator |
| <u>2 - Strictly protect at least a third of the EU's protected areas, including all remaining EU primary and old-growth forests</u> | <p>PLACEHOLDER – Indicator on strictly protected areas (several options under exploration by EEA)</p> <p>PLACEHOLDER – Indicator on the percentage of remaining primary and old-growth forests under strict protection regime (under exploration by EEA)</p> | Expecting an operational definition of strict protection and whether and how this will be integrated in MS reporting / Keep exploring indicators for the other aspects of this target |
| <u>3 - Effectively manage all protected areas, defining clear conservation objectives and measures, and monitoring them appropriately</u> | | Expecting to see whether and how management effectiveness will be integrated in MS reporting |
| <u>4 - Legally binding EU nature restoration targets to be proposed in 2021, subject to an impact assessment. By 2030, significant areas of degraded and carbon-rich ecosystems are restored. Habitats and species show no deterioration in conservation trends and status; and at least 30% reach favourable conservation status or at least show a positive trend.</u> | <p>Common bird index by type of species (ESTAT)</p> <p>PLACEHOLDER - Red List Index at EU and/or Pan-European level (Red Pulse project)</p> <p>PLACEHOLDER – Nature Restoration Law (NRL) indicators</p> | Follow up the development of the Red List Index, the conclusions of NRL negotiations including NRL indicators |
| <u>5 - The decline of pollinators is reversed</u> | <p>Grassland butterfly index (ESTAT)</p> <p>PLACEHOLDER - General trend of pollinators (EU Pollinators Initiative)</p> | Follow up the development of the indicator in the EU Pollinators Initiative |
| <u>6 - The risk and use of chemical pesticides is reduced by 50%, and the use of more hazardous pesticides is reduced by 50%</u> | <p>Use and risk of chemical pesticides (ESTAT)</p> <p>Use of more hazardous pesticides (ESTAT)</p> | Publish the indicators in the EU BDS dashboard |
| <u>7 - At least 10% of agricultural area is under high-diversity landscape features</u> | <p>Share of agricultural area covered with landscape features (JRC)</p> <p>Woody landscape features on agricultural land (EEA)</p> | Publish the selected indicator in the EU BDS dashboard |
| <u>8 - At least 25% of agricultural land is under organic farming management, and the uptake of agro-ecological practices is significantly increased</u> | <p>Area under organic farming (ESTAT)</p> <p>Trends in the uptake of agro-ecological practices (JRC)</p> | Publish the selected indicator in the EU BDS dashboard |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <u>9 - Three billion additional trees are planted in the EU, in full respect of ecological principles</u> | Number of trees planted in the EU as part of the 3 Billion Trees Pledge (EEA) | None |
| <u>10 - Significant progress in the remediation of contaminated soil sites</u> | Increase in the number of remediated sites (EEA) | Improve the estimation of the remediation of contaminated sites through better data collection for this indicator |
| <u>11 - At least 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers are restored</u> | PLACEHOLDER - Indicator for river connectivity | Follow up the development of the indicator under discussion in the ECOSTAT subgroup |
| <u>12 - There is a 50% reduction in the number of Red List species threatened by invasive alien species (IAS)</u> | PLACEHOLDER - Change in the number of native species assessed as threatened within the Red List and reported as affected by IAS (Red Pulse project) | Follow up the development of the indicator by the project |
| <u>13 - The losses of nutrients from fertilisers are reduced by 50%, resulting in the reduction of the use of fertilisers by at least 20%.</u> | Change in the concentration of nitrate in groundwater (EEA) Change in the concentration of nitrate in rivers (EEA) Change in the concentration of phosphate in rivers (EEA) Change in the concentration of total phosphorus in lakes (EEA) ON HOLD - Consumption of inorganic fertilisers | Keep exploring other indicators on the use of fertilisers trying to align with the Zero Pollution monitoring |
| <u>14 - Cities with at least 20,000 inhabitants have an ambitious Urban Greening Plan</u> | | JRC team of KCBD is exploring possible solutions to collect data to inform this target via a collaboration with a visiting scientist |
| <u>15 - The negative impacts on sensitive species and habitats, including on the seabed through fishing and extraction activities, are substantially reduced to achieve good environmental status</u> | Proportion of fish stocks sustainably exploited (ESTAT based on JRC) | Keep exploring indicators for the other aspects of this target |
| <u>16 - The by-catch of species is eliminated or reduced to a level that allows species recovery and conservation</u> | | Expecting the developments under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the Action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems |

EUBP meeting in November 2023, the two proposed indicators have been selected to be added to the EU BDS dashboard: (i) “Share of agricultural area covered with landscape features” and (ii) “Trends in the uptake of agro-ecological practices”. They are planned to be published by the end of 2024, together with the two previously proposed pesticide indicators “Use and risk of chemical pesticides” and “Use of more hazardous pesticides”, which are already published by DG SANTE to monitor progress towards the Farm to Fork targets¹. The EU BDS dashboard remains publicly accessible through the [KCBD website](#) under “Tools”.

Future steps for the EU BDS dashboard

Plan for 2024

The priority until the end of 2024 is to add the 4 indicators that have been selected to the EU BDS dashboard (“Share of agricultural area covered with landscape features”, “Trends in the uptake of agro-ecological practices”, “Use and risk of chemical pesticides” and “Use of more hazardous pesticides”). After publication of these 4 indicators, the EU BDS dashboard will contain 20 indicators to monitor progress on 10 out of the 16 EU BDS targets (Table 1).

Two other topics to improve visualisation are still being discussed. The first topic is the improvement of the visualisation for marine protected areas indicators. Three options are currently being discussed: (i) keep the current visualisation (map with land boundaries of Member States), (ii) replace the current visualisation with a map of marine boundaries of Member States (using Exclusive Economic Zones) or (iii) add a second map on top of the existing one showing the values by sea region. The second topic is the creation of a summary for the EU BDS dashboard.

Plan for 2025 and beyond

The KCBD has further identified two indicators that are relevant and mature enough to be added in the EU BDS dashboard from early 2025. These are “Natural area connectivity on land” to monitor progress towards target 1 and “Woody landscape features on agricultural land”² to monitor progress towards target 7 (Table 1). Specifically, “Natural area connectivity” can help in monitoring progress towards the integration of ecological corridors to build a True

Trans-European Nature Network on land, while “Woody landscape features on agricultural land” can help in monitoring progress regarding the coverage of agricultural land with some high-diversity landscape features (the woody ones). Factsheets further describing these indicators are available in the annex to this note. **EUBP-MA is invited to give its feedback on the addition of these proposed indicators in the EU BDS dashboard.**

In addition, the KCBD is still following the development of relevant indicators that are not ready yet, referred as placeholders in Table 1. These are: (i) an indicator on the representativeness of the protected areas network expressed as the mean target achievement (NaturaConnect and MPA Europe) (ii) an indicator on strictly protected areas (EEA), (iii) an indicator on the percentage of remaining primary and old-growth forests under strict protection regime (EEA), (iv) the Red List Index at EU and/or Pan-European level (Red Pulse project), (v) indicators from the [Nature Restoration Law](#) (NRL), (vi) general trend of pollinators ([EU Pollinators Initiative](#)), (vii) an indicator about river connectivity (developed by JRC and EEA also to inform the Water Directive), and (viii) change in the number of native species assessed as threatened within the IUCN Red List and reported as affected by IAS (depending on outputs from the Red Pulse project).

The indicator “Consumption of inorganic fertilisers” remains on hold (Table 1) following a comment of one Member State arguing that the focus on inorganic fertilisers was too narrow to monitor the reduction in the use of fertilisers.

Adding the two indicators proposed and the 8 placeholders in the EU BDS dashboard would result in a total of 30 indicators informing 13 targets, although the timeline to get the placeholders is uncertain. Therefore, only 3 targets would be without clearly identified indicators: targets 3, 14, and 16. The JRC team of KCBD has just initiated a collaboration with Israa Mahmoud, a visiting scientist from Politecnico Milano, to explore possible solutions to collect data for informing target 14. In order to have an EU BDS dashboard as complete as possible in the next years, this work should continue and future efforts should focus on identifying or developing concrete proposals to inform targets 3 and 16. The KCBD will continue to coordinate these efforts between EEA, ESTAT and JRC, and may

¹ https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/pesticides/sustainable-use-pesticides/farm-fork-targets-progress/eu-trends_en

² <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/indicators/woody-landscape-features-on-agricultural-land>

request further support from its [Science Service](#) to screen, identify and channel relevant research outputs for this goal. Finally, the alignment between the EU BDS dashboard and the future NRL monitoring tools will need to be further discussed once the conclusions of NRL negotiations become available.

Biodiversity financing indicator

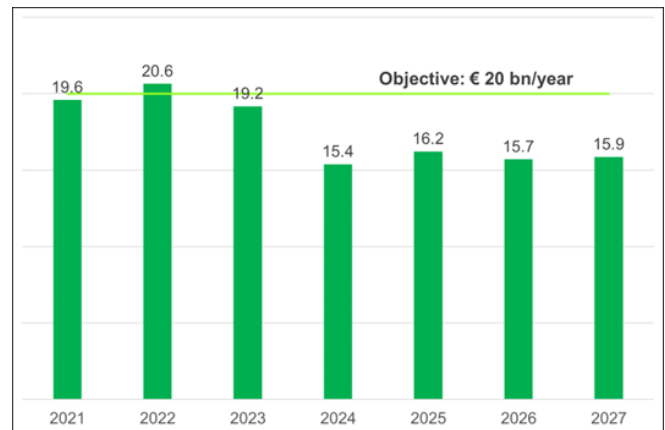
The indicator to track progress on the EU BDS commitment to unlock at least € 20 billion/year for biodiversity that was presented in the [science for policy brief ahead of last EUBP-MA meeting](#) has now been finalised. The proposed annual biodiversity financing indicator focuses on finance mobilised through EU funds and instruments, which has an enabling role and is monitored in a broadly consistent way, thanks to the EC tracking methodology. By adding up data on EU biodiversity-related financing from the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) augmented by NextGenerationEU, Member State co-financing, and private (and public) financing mobilised through InvestEU – the most important EU financial repayable support instrument – the indicator can provide aggregate information on financing from these different sources.

The contents of the indicator reflects a balance between accuracy and feasibility. For each of its three components, the data available were examined in terms of accuracy, timeliness and consistency as well as the possibility to rely on existing reporting processes. The approach proposed is as simple as possible and aims to ensure that the annual update could be done smoothly and quickly. The indicator could be updated every year along with the EU budget process. As it includes some approximations and its annual profile can be affected by different factors, notably the dynamics of implementation of EU funds, it would appear more meaningful to present its value for all 7 years of the MFF, in line with what is done for the EU budget data.

The results of the first complete calculation indicate that the €20 billion/year target was almost met in 2021 and was met in 2022 but not in 2023 (with a gap of €0.8 billion). The projections suggest that in

the following years, it is unlikely to be met (with substantial financing gaps of c.a. €4 billion every year). These results, shown in Figure 1, are coherent with the analysis of progress towards the ambition set in the EU inter-institutional agreement of reaching 10% of the EU budget in 2026 and in 2027.

Figure 1 – Annual biodiversity financing indicator



Source: JRC calculations based on EC data, updated in March 2024.

Although this indicator is not of the same nature as the other indicators of the EU BDS dashboard (notably, it can be calculated only for the EU as a whole, and its production cannot be automated), it would help monitor overall progress on biodiversity financing in the EU. Since adequate financial resources are recognised as a crucial enabling factor achieving the EU BDS objectives, it could thus complement the current monitoring framework. A factsheet further describing this indicator is available in the annex to this note. **EUBP-MA is invited to give its feedback on this indicator.**

DISCLAIMER OR OTHER FINAL DETAILS

This note has been prepared by the KCBD Secretariat in JRC (Marine Robuchon, Camino Liqueste, Aude Neuville, Giacomo Delli, Georgios Gkimtsas, Dimitrios Goutis and Israa Mahmoud) with inputs from another JRC colleague (Peter Vogt) and EEA (Janica Borg, Andrea Hagyo) for the 5th EUBP-MA meeting.

COPYRIGHT

© European Union, 2024

CONTACT INFORMATION

EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity: EC-Biodiversity-KC@ec.europa.eu



EU Science Hub
[Joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu)