

MONITORING AND EVALUATING BIODIVERSITY OUTCOMES FROM BUSINESS ACTIVITIES



Monitoring and evaluation helps companies identify environmental risks. Credit: Jeremy Holden/FFI.

Background

Increasingly, companies are striving to understand and manage their impacts and dependencies on biodiversity and natural services. In order to do so, they and their stakeholders need to know whether the environmental targets they set are being met.

By monitoring changes to natural systems over time, companies can evaluate their impacts on biodiversity and respond, where necessary, by changing their behaviour to meet agreed goals and objectives. This process – monitoring and evaluation – helps companies identify and minimise environmental risks, better manage projects and gain the support of regulators, communities and other groups who have a stake in their operations.

Why monitor and evaluate?

In order to implement a project effectively, companies must be able to manage their risks, ensure that operations deliver conservation objectives as planned, and identify and respond to any unexpected problems. Monitoring and evaluation is a key component of project implementation and adaptive management that helps businesses meet these needs. Integrating monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity outcomes into a plan-do-check-act cycle can help companies:

- **Manage risks** by understanding, predicting, minimising and preventing impacts on biodiversity and by identifying new issues when they first appear.
- **Meet targets** by reviewing environmental performance against objectives such as company goals or policy requirements in order to measure success and improve approaches.
- **Increase environmental benefits** by ensuring the greatest possible environmental outcomes at each project stage.
- **Create business benefits** by communicating transparently with stakeholders and demonstrating how environmental performance meets expectations. These benefits include building support from communities and other stakeholders for business operations (a company's social license to operate) and maintaining a strong reputation with communities, governments and NGOs.
- **Learn and adapt** by using feedback to evaluate the success of current methods, adapt management and even improve company policies.

Indicators of change

Monitoring approaches vary greatly depending on the landscape and biodiversity in question, but all have one thing in common: the use of indicators to identify and measure change. Indicators help to identify issues and understand trends by presenting information about complex and changing ecosystems in a way that businesses and their stakeholders can understand.

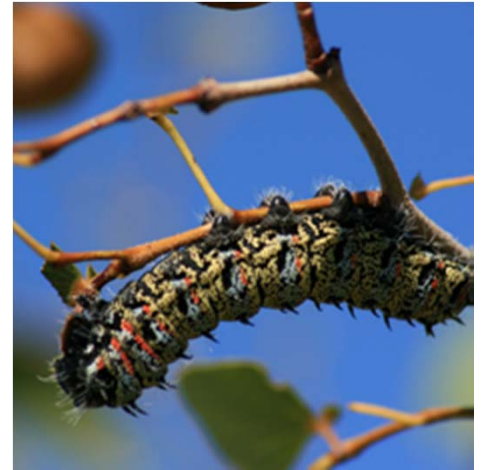
Indicators help measure changes to the state of biodiversity and ecosystems, and hence monitor the effects of threats to important species, habitats and natural services. They should be relevant to the ecosystem and biodiversity in question and communicated to regulators, local communities and other stakeholders.



Monitoring changes to ecosystems over time allows companies to evaluate their impacts on biodiversity.
Credit: Pippa Howard/FFI.



Effective monitoring programmes must be grounded in baseline studies.
Credit: Juan Pablo Moreiras/FFI.



Monitoring must also capture ecosystem functions that are not easily observable.
Credit: Pippa Howard/FFI.

Getting it right

Monitoring and evaluation programmes are most effective for businesses and their stakeholders when designed to take place throughout the life of a project. They also need to be grounded in baseline studies that capture the state of a landscape or ecosystem prior to development. Importantly, monitoring should also:

- Include the many ways in which people use and value ecosystems
- Consider changes to natural processes that occur at significant distances from an operation
- Take place over a sufficient time frame to capture ecosystem functions that are not readily observable
- Capture changes in biodiversity that are influenced by external pressures or result from cumulative impacts.

Thinking big

Making information from monitoring available locally, nationally and internationally is an excellent opportunity for companies to support current and future conservation efforts. By engaging local partner organisations in monitoring programmes, international companies can help increase local capacity. If made publicly available, data from monitoring programmes can also be used to link into national planning and management processes that aim to conserve nature. These contributions are especially valuable in countries that lack the capacity, locally or nationally, to measure, monitor and protect biodiversity.

Our work with monitoring and evaluation

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) works in partnership with companies to understand the complex environments in which they operate and to guide them in managing their impacts. We support businesses in designing appropriate monitoring plans and provide expertise in selecting indicators that are appropriate and measurable.

FFI also supports companies by monitoring and evaluating their approaches to biodiversity conservation at a strategic level. For example, we have participated in and led 22 Biodiversity Peer Reviews conducted on Anglo American mining operations. These reviews evaluated the company's approaches to managing biodiversity impacts and helped achieve measurable reductions to biodiversity impacts.

References

1. EBI. Biodiversity Indicators for Monitoring Impacts and Conservation Actions. The Energy and Biodiversity Initiative. Available at: <http://www.theebi.org/pdfs/indicators.pdf>.
2. EBI. Integrating Biodiversity into Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Processes. The Energy and Biodiversity Initiative. Available at: <http://www.theebi.org/pdfs/esia.pdf>.

If you have any questions or would like further information please contact

**Pippa Howard on 01223 579 493
or email pippa.howard@fauna-flora.org**



Fauna & Flora International, 4th Floor, Jupiter House, Station Road, Cambridge, CB1 2JD UK
Telephone +44 (0) 1223 571000 Fax +44 (0) 1223 46148 Email info@fauna-flora.org