

# Corporate responsibility and biodiversity: How can you make a difference?!

## The GLOBIO related Biodiversity Footprint method

In recent years companies have significantly increased focus on their relation to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity and natural capital. Many sectors, directly or indirectly, heavily depend on services that nature supplies, such as pollination, water storage, water treatment and soil fertility. Pressure on these services is increasing because biodiversity is deteriorating in many (production) areas.

A growing group of companies gives attention to biodiversity as part of socially responsible business. In addition, business economics plays an important role, for strengthening market position, boosting new markets and addressing environmentally related requests of investors.

### But how does a company determine its impact on biodiversity?

With a growing attention to biodiversity, the question arises how a company can effectively take into account biodiversity. For example: What is the impact of the company on biodiversity? Is this a direct impact of your own business process or an indirect impact by your suppliers? How do you measure the impact of measures that aim to reduce this impact? In order to get satisfying answers, it is necessary to look at the local level at pressures that are associated with the production process (*such as the use of land for the production of raw materials and business buildings, greenhouse gas emissions or groundwater extraction*) and their impact on biodiversity. With such information it will become clear to what extent measures contribute to the reduction of the impact on biodiversity and if it is useful to invest in such measures and communicate about them.

### Globio: A proven, location-specific method

Our biodiversity footprint methodology is based on the internationally implemented GLOBIO methodology and can answer the above questions. GLOBIO uses so-called 'dose-response' relationships (i.e. the effect of a pressure factor on biodiversity), that are based on the best available scientific knowledge. The local impact of pressure

factors is determined in terms of the presence of species and the number of individuals per species. GLOBIO assesses the effects of several human related pressures. The footprint method so far has been elaborated for the impact of three pressure types: *Climate change, Land use and Emissions of nitrogen and phosphorous into water*. In addition, the impact of *Water extraction* is added for the Dutch situation. By comparing the impact in the current situation (before measures) with the impact in a new situation (after measures) the effectiveness of biodiversity friendly measures can be tested, not only afterwards but also in advance. On the basis of this method companies can assess what their current impact on biodiversity is and what the future impact could be after implementation of planned measures.

### Getting started

The GLOBIO related biodiversity footprint method is fully transparent and publicly available. In order to work with the method, an inventory of the aforementioned pressure factors (land use, greenhouse gas emissions, and emissions to water) is required, preferably not only for the company itself, but also in its supply chain. The method can, for instance, be applied to relevant midpoint indicators in Life Cycle Assessments, to assess the impact of the full life cycle of products. No specific software is required. Calculations can be done with the free available dose-response relations in a normal spreadsheet. Although a company might basically be able to work with the method itself, support is recommended by someone who is acquainted with the methodology and who knows how and where to find the required data.

Do you want to know your impact on biodiversity and what you can do to prevent or limit it?

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Methodology and case studies can be found on:  
<http://www.plansup.nl/models/biodiversity-footprint-model/>