

## FRANKFURT DECLARATION

### FOR THE UN BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE (COP15)

**The dramatic loss of biodiversity threatens our basis of life. Science, politics, business, and civil society must now join forces to promote nature-positive corporate action.**

The advancing warming of the climate and the **unchecked loss of global biodiversity** threaten our basis of life, and all of humanity. We are currently on a course toward a 3°C rise in temperatures and the loss of one million species by the end of the century. These dramatic developments are of our own making. We are using natural resources beyond their capacity limits and continue to rely on an economic order that allows us to take advantage of the diverse ecosystem services at no cost. As a result, we are destroying natural resources, including biodiversity, thereby endangering our very own future.

We are in dire need of a decisive **trend reversal** toward an economic order that puts an adequate price on the use of nature – and not just in monetary terms. After the sobering outcome of the recently concluded World *Climate* Summit in Sharm-el-Sheikh, this applies all the more to the World *Biodiversity* Summit in Montreal, which begins next week. A binding global agreement of historic proportions is required for the protection of nature. It must provide a framework for halting the loss of biodiversity, preserving intact natural areas, managing them sustainably, and restoring habitats that have been destroyed.

In this context, Germany must acknowledge its responsibility and take on a **pioneering role**. As the world's fourth-largest economy, we create an immense "biodiversity footprint": The global value chains of German companies have a significant impact on nature, frequently contributing to its destruction. However, an increasing number of companies are willing to take responsibility and help initiate a reversal of this trend. Germany offers particularly suitable framework conditions in this regard. There are few countries that produce scientific findings on biodiversity on a comparable scale; that boast a similar volume of solid, area-wide biodiversity data; and that are launching such ambitious initiatives aimed at global nature conservation as Germany.

As the initiators of this declaration, we call on science, politics, business, and civil society to **join forces**. The aim of our joint commitment is to create the necessary conditions for nature-positive, i.e., resource- and nature-conserving, corporate action to prove worthwhile. A successful trend reversal is only possible if companies make a strong commitment by ceasing environmentally harmful behavior and using new business models and innovative technologies to sustainably benefit from global biodiversity. Our initiative is open, and we cordially invite committed comrades-in-arms to become actively involved.

For companies to be able to act in a nature-positive way, clear framework conditions must be set by the policymakers, and joint steps need to be taken by science, business, and civil society.

### Our six demands to policymakers:

1. **A level playing field for companies** – smart, knowledge-based sustainability regulations for a positive biodiversity development. The intended goal is to establish nature-positive business practices as the standard. To this end, it is essential to hold polluters accountable for the social costs of exploiting nature and its resources. This means internalizing the costs that have thus far been imposed on the general public or on future generations. In this context, it is important to create equitable framework conditions, provide companies with planning security, offer meaningful incentives, and effectively curtail greenwashing.
2. **Uniform standards and mandatory biodiversity reporting by companies.** Policymakers must ensure that companies and financial institutions regularly measure (or arrange for the measurement of) their direct and indirect use of biodiversity and other natural resources in accordance with a science-based, uniform procedure, and report on how they implement improvements along the value chains. A corresponding commitment must be adopted at the COP15.
3. **Immediate reduction of environmentally harmful subsidies.** Existing financial incentives, tax regulations, and subsidies must be reformed in such a way that public and private financial flows are directed toward nature-positive activities. This creates a level playing field for companies and prevents market distortions. An effective agreement at the COP15 is required to achieve this goal.
4. **Ensuring deforestation-free supply chains.** The respective EU regulation must be adopted before the end of this year and be implemented in a timely manner. In addition, the regulation must be extended globally to cover all natural ecosystems (including savannahs, grasslands, and wetlands).
5. **Adopting the “30x30” target** (protection of at least 30 percent of all terrestrial and marine habitats by 2030) as well as **ambitious renaturation goals.** The focus of both targets, which must be adopted at the COP15, should be on ecosystems with the highest importance for biodiversity and climate protection. It is further essential to implement the 30x30 target in a verifiable manner. As recognized, nature-based solutions, these targets often provide the opportunity for companies to invest in “carbon offset” programs, thus contributing to the implementation of

both targets. In order to prevent “greenwashing,” globally uniform, binding, and science-based minimum standards are required.

6. **Inclusion of biodiversity in the “Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda” initiated by the German federal government** – be it for new food products, biodiversity informatics and analytical techniques, or in the fields of biomaterials, bionics, and biopharmaceuticals. In addition, a more effective national biodiversity strategy is needed. This includes setting verifiable biodiversity targets analogous to the climate targets and a binding implementation in all public projects – including the possibility of sanctions in the event the targets are not met.

In the spirit of a close alliance between science, politics, business, and civil society, we want to help develop and apply this framework for nature-positive corporate action.

#### **Our six offers from science, business, and civil society:**

1. Developing an **assessment logic for “nature-positive business operations,”** including appropriate biodiversity metrics. A binding nature or biodiversity index will provide regulators, rating agencies, investors, and corporate decision-makers with the ability to act, accelerating the harmonization of ESG standards.
2. Developing **pathways for the comprehensive reallocation of environmentally harmful subsidies.** These have been lacking to date and should be drawn up on the basis of science and with concrete recommendations for a phasing out by 2030.
3. Expansion of global **biodiversity monitoring programs;** in this context, the activities of the National Monitoring Center on Biodiversity (NMZB) launched in Germany should be developed in such a way that they can serve as a model. New technologies allow cost-effective monitoring of biodiversity and carbon storage at a high spatial and temporal resolution, providing the basis for nature-positive land management, assessment of the natural capital, corporate reporting, and neutralization measures.
4. Establishing a **global and publicly accessible biodiversity database.** To this end, we are consolidating the wealth of data from international biodiversity research, using existing tools for recording biodiversity in real time and developing them further at a rapid pace, thereby striving to create a “digital twin of the living world.”
5. Highlighting **“best practices” for nature-positive business operations.** To date, convincing examples of corporate approaches to biodiversity conservation are barely tangible or existent – we aim to change this.

6. Encouraging the **investment of money in companies, funds, or initiatives for biodiversity**. Public funds cannot only be used in a targeted fashion, they can also mobilize private financial resources. One example of this is the Legacy Landscapes Fund (LLF).

The UN Biodiversity Conference in Montreal must set the course for ushering in the biodiversity trend reversal. For us, one thing is certain: Germany can live up to its role as a biodiversity pioneer. We acknowledge the responsibility we bear in our respective fields of activity – be it in science, politics, business, or civil society. We actively contribute to a successful turnaround toward a nature-positive economy!

Frankfurt, November 2022

**Link to the Frankfurt Declaration:** <https://frankfurter-erklaerung.eu/>

**Link to the Berlin Declaration:** <http://berliner-erklaerung.eu/>