



## BIODIVERSITY SELF-CHECK for Accommodation Businesses

**The Biodiversity Self-Check is a support tool for hotels and other accommodation providers to evaluate the current engagement to protect biodiversity and to identify potential areas for improvements.**

Intact nature and biodiversity are crucial to the economic success of an accommodation business. On the one hand, the tourism sector depends on landscapes and biodiversity, and on the other hand, it can contribute to protecting valuable habitats, fauna and flora through targeted measures.

This is a worthwhile task for every business, because ecosystems and species are being lost every day, and with them important ecosystem services such as fertile soils, pollination, freshwater and microclimate. Changes in land use and overuse of natural resources are on the rise and the dramatic decline in ecosystems and animal and plant species worldwide has still not been stopped.

Biodiversity is colourful and emotional. For accommodation providers, this topic offers numerous opportunities to involve guests, staff and stakeholders: information about nature in the region is well received by guests. A biodiversity-oriented design of the outdoor facilities promotes the well-being of guests and employees and can be advertised to the public as a 'green business card'. Products from extensive or organic farming are positive for biodiversity and the health of guests. Voluntary participation in nature conservation projects at the location is fun for employees and guests and promotes team spirit.

Accommodation providers can take targeted measures to counteract negative effects on biodiversity. By using certified food and materials for interior design and fittings, or organic cotton for towels and bed linen, businesses can conserve natural resources.

The importance of environmental quality as a decision-making criterion for tourists is continuously increasing, and the expectations of guests regarding the protection of biodiversity are growing. Tour operators, standards and labels are also responding to this increasing awareness and are increasingly demanding criteria for the protection of biodiversity from accommodation providers.

### What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity, or biological diversity, refers to the variety of life on Earth. This includes the diversity of ecosystems worldwide, diversity of plant and animal species and the genetic diversity within species.

### Biodiversity Self-Check

- Offers you, as an accommodation provider, the opportunity to identify points of contact with biodiversity and determine your baseline.
- Refers to the various components of your company that are relevant to biodiversity (purchasing, waste management, guest information, buildings and outdoor facilities, training, commitment, management/strategy).
- Includes suggestions for measures you can take to help preserve and promote biodiversity.
- Is the first step towards integrating biodiversity into a company's environmental or sustainability management.
- Also contains references to best practice examples, key players, legal frameworks and standards.



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## Biologische Vielfalt





Das Bundesprogramm

Components of the Company with Relevance for Biodiversity	Implemented	In preparation	Not implemented	Efforts (low = L)	 Knowledge Pool Tourism and Biodiversity
 <b>Procurement</b>					
Printed and paper products (advertising materials, printer paper, napkins, hygiene paper, etc.) come from recycled or certified sources.				L	<a href="#">EU Ecolabel for paper products:</a>  FSC-Label (Forest Stewardship Council) for Paper and Packaging <a href="https://fsc.org/en/businesses/paper-packaging">https://fsc.org/en/businesses/paper-packaging</a>
The company does not sell souvenirs made from endangered animal or plant species.				L	<a href="#">- International Convention CITES:</a> <a href="#">- CITES Species Checklist</a> <a href="#">- WWF Souvenir-Recommendations</a>
The company does not use any products from producers which do not consider well-being of the animals.					<a href="#">- World Organisation for Animal Health</a>
The company uses the following in its catering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certified sea fish, certified fish from aquaculture or fish from the region that has been proven to have been caught or farmed in an environmentally sustainable manner.</li> <li>Products from certified organic farming or from responsible, certified conventional farming – preferable from the region</li> <li>Products that are not grown in your own country/region (e.g. tea, coffee, cocoa), with a sustainability label.</li> <li>No genetically modified products</li> <li>Products with a recognized animal welfare label</li> </ul>				L	<a href="#">- Siegel für Fisch und Meeresfrüchte aus Zertifizierter nachhaltiger Fischerei (MSC)</a>  <a href="#">ASC-Label Aquaculture Stewardship Council</a>  <a href="#">WWF Sea Food Guides:</a>
				L	Examples for food standards with ambitious criteria for biodiversity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organic products: Bioland, Naturland, Demeter, Ecoland</li> <li>Conventionally produced: Global G.A.P., Biodiversity Add-On, Planet Proof, Biodiversity Grow, ISCC Plus, Donau Soy, Europe Soy</li> <li>Products from the global South: Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade, GEPA, 4C Coffee Standard, ISCC Plus</li> </ul>
				L	<a href="#">- World Organisation for Animal Health</a>
Floral decorations are sourced from regional or certified origins.					<a href="#">- Fairtrade Flowers: Social and ecological standards</a> <a href="#">- Ecofriendly-cut flowers</a>

Components of the Company with Relevance for Biodiversity	Implemented	In preparation	Not implemented	Efforts (low = L)	 Knowledge Pool Tourism and Biodiversity
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fair Flowers – Fair Plants</li> <li>- <a href="#">Fair Flora Evaluation System</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Recommendations for biodiversity criteria in ornamental plant production</a></li> </ul>
<i>The cleaning products used are biodegradable.</i>				L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Blue Angel Label</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Sustainable Cleaning Products</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">European Ecolabel Cleaning</a></li> </ul>
<i>The towels, bed linen and tablecloths used are mainly made from organic cotton.</i>				L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- G.O.T.S. (Global Organic Textil Standard)</li> <li>- <a href="#">Cotton Made in Afrika</a></li> </ul>
 <b>Waste management</b>					
<i>The company is taking measures to minimise food waste.</i>				L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Prevention of food waste in the catering sector</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">European Hospitality Industry Guidelines to reduce food waste</a></li> </ul>
<i>The company does not use single-use plastic items and avoids/reduces plastic waste overall.</i>				L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">EU Regulation on packaging</a> and ban of single-use packaging</li> <li>- <a href="#">4ocean: Sustainable Travel: A Look at Hotels Leading the Way in Reducing Plastic Waste</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Accor Group: Elimination of single-use plastic</a></li> </ul>
 <b>Information for guests</b>					
<i>Guests are provided with detailed information about nature and biodiversity in the holiday region and receive tips on how to contribute to the protection.</i>				L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">What ecotourism is and why it must include protecting wildlife</a></li> </ul>
<i>Guests are offered the opportunity to actively participate in projects for the protection of nature in the holiday region or to support them financially.</i>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examples: <a href="#">WWF Travel</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Lake District Foundation</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">TUI: protect threatened species through nature-based tourism projects</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Biosphere Expeditions</a></li> </ul>
<i>The company offers only biodiversity-responsible excursions.</i>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examples <a href="#">Sustainable Travel Germany</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">To-Do Award for socially and environmental responsible tourism</a></li> </ul>
<i>The company as well as the destination refrains from offering and promoting visits to dolphin and orca shows, as well as other attractions where animals are not kept in a manner appropriate to their species.</i>				L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">ABTA Animal Welfare Guidelines</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Circuses without wild animals</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Born Free: Circuses and performing animals</a></li> </ul>
<i>As part of its guest survey, the company also asks questions about biodiversity in the region (e.g. perception of problems). The results are made available to destination management for biodiversity monitoring purposes.</i>				L	

Components of the Company with Relevance for Biodiversity	Implemented	In preparation	Not implemented	Efforts (low = L)	 Knowledge Pool Tourism and Biodiversity
 <b>Buildings and Outdoor Facilities</b>					
<i>Biodiversity-oriented outdoor facilities</i>					
<p>At least 30% of the outdoor facilities are designed and maintained in a biodiversity-oriented way, e.g. by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating new habitats (e.g. dry stone walls, dead wood, etc.).</li> <li>• Using native plants that are suitable for the location.</li> <li>• Facade and roof greening</li> <li>• Avoiding the use of pesticides and synthetic fertilisers.</li> </ul>					<p>Initiatives – Support for companies: <a href="#">Biodiversity-oriented premises (BOP)</a></p> <p>Publications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">BOP Tool-Box for mediterranean sites</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">BOP Best Practise Examples</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Bird strike: Facts and solutions</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">DGNB Nachhaltiges Bauen - Biodiversität</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">DGNB Sustainable Building Biodiversity</a></li> </ul>
The company is informed about alien invasive species in the region.				L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">EU Regulation 1143/2014: Invasive Alien Species Regulation</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">European Portal Invasive Alien Species</a></li> </ul>
The company contacts the nature conservation authority if they spread to the outdoor area and ask for advice on how to control them.				L	
The habitats (e.g. small bodies of water, meadows, hedge structures, trees) on the outdoor grounds and their development are recorded (checklist, photo documentation). If possible, the presence of animal and/or plant species is documented as well.					<a href="#">Biodiversity Information System for Europe</a> <a href="#">EU Habitats Directive</a>
<b>Construction/materials and furnishings</b>					
For new buildings: An environmental impact assessment (EIA) is carried out with explicit examination of the impact on biodiversity.				L	
In case of construction work, it is ensured that no materials/products from protected species are used (e.g. non-certified tropical woods, non-sustainable natural stone).				L	<a href="#">Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)</a> <a href="#">FSC Construction material</a>
Certified materials, such as FSC-certified furniture and floorboards, are used in the interior design.					- <a href="#">FSC certified furniture</a>
 <b>Capacity Building /Training</b>					
Nature conservation and biodiversity are an integral part of the training provided to employees of the company.					<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">WWF Akademie</a></li> <li><a href="#">WWF Academy</a></li> <li><a href="#">Living Lakes Academy</a></li> </ul>
 <b>Engagement</b>					

Components of the Company with Relevance for Biodiversity	Implemented	In preparation	Not implemented	Efforts (low = L)	 <b>Knowledge Pool Tourism and Biodiversity</b>
<i>The company is committed to protecting endangered animal and plant species in the region by providing financial support for conservation measures.</i>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gefährdete Tierarten in Deutschland (BfN)</li> <li>- <a href="#">IUCN Red List of threatened species</a></li> </ul>
<i>Employees are encouraged to participate in projects run by nature conservation associations and authorities (Corporate Volunteering).</i>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Corporate Volunteering in Nationalen Naturlandschaften</li> </ul>
<i>The company encourages other businesses to get involved in nature conservation and species protection.</i>					
 <b>Strategy/Management</b>					
<i>Legal regulations relevant to the accommodation business concerning nature conservation are known and complied with.</i>				E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Unternehmen Biologische Vielfalt - Rechtsgrundlagen</a></li> </ul>
<i>The company has conducted a risk analysis and recorded its direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity.</i>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Unternehmen Biologische Vielfalt – Einstieg in das Management</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">CBD: Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development</a></li> </ul>
<i>As part of the company's sustainability management, targets and measures for preserving and promoting biodiversity have been set.</i>				E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Leitfaden EMAS und Biodiversität</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Guidelines EMAS and Biodiversity</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">ISO 17298 Biodiversity — Considering biodiversity in the strategy and operations of organizations — Requirements and guidelines</a></li> </ul>
<i>An employee was appointed to coordinate and promote activities related to biodiversity.</i>					
<i>If the company operates in a protected area, the requirements for tourist use (e.g. requirements from the management plan) are taken into account.</i>				E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">IUCN: Tourism and visitor management in protected areas</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Europarc: Guide to sustainable tourism in protected areas</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">UN Tourism: Ecotourism and protected areas</a></li> </ul>
<i>The company is aware of endangered species in the region.</i>					
<i>The company knows the responsible nature protection administration of the region.</i>				E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Akteure Biodiversität und Tourismus - "Who is Who"</li> </ul>

## Your path to a biodiversity-friendly business

The following steps will help you achieve continuous improvement in terms of biodiversity:

1. How active are you already? To determine your current level of commitment, mark all measures that are already in place in the 'Implemented' column and measures that are planned for the near future or whose implementation has been initiated in the 'In preparation' column.
2. If you have answered 'Implemented' for most of the measures, you have already taken aspects of biodiversity conservation into account. Congratulations! Stay active, gather ideas and set yourself further goals for the continuous improvement of your biodiversity commitment with the help of

the sources mentioned and the information in the knowledge pool at <https://destinet.eu/topics/natural-cultural-heritage/biodiversity/>

3. If this is not the case, expand your commitment. First, identify all measures that seem sensible and fundamentally feasible for you.  
Then, in the next step, decide which of the feasible measures you would like to work on in the coming years. Every beginning is easy! Please start with measures that you are confident will be successful and effective. Measures to protect biodiversity that require little effort (in terms of personnel or finances) are marked with an 'L' for 'low effort' in a separate column. The implementation of measures that seem difficult to you can be divided into stages with intermediate goals.
4. Seek advice and support! Find out about the advisory services offered by relevant tourism and nature conservation experts and authorities.
5. A general biodiversity check can also help you on your way to becoming a biodiversity-responsible accommodation provider.
6. Further recommendations for measures to protect biological diversity can be found in the publication 'Biodiversity Criteria for Tourism: Recommendations for Standards, Labels and Awards' in the chapter 'Criteria for Businesses'.

This selfcheck is also available [in digital form in the UBi knowledge pool](#).

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**The Tourism 2030 Sustainability Portal acknowledges the central role of [Natural Heritage](#) assets in tourism destinations, visitor experiences and ecosystem services.** As well as having their own intrinsic value, natural assets are of immense importance for tourism, which can both support and threaten their continuation and development. Many forms of tourism heavily depend on intact nature able to supply of ecosystem resources, e.g. holding a great value for leisure and recreation providing the base and backdrop for many tourism activities.

As such the Portal offers sustainability tools and knowledge services to all tourism stakeholders, each of whom must accept the responsibility to conserve and enhance all forms of natural heritage. This requires a firm commitment to effective planning and management, especially in protected areas, including responsible interpretation of heritage and **visitor management**, supported by tourism stakeholders working in collaboration with common conservation goals. The Biodiversity Self-Check is one tool you can find in the portal alongside the [Tourism 2030 Going Green Ecosystem](#), which provides businesses, destinations and other tourism intermediaries with a complete sustainability support service related to national, EU and UN legal directives and businesses requirements.