

UK Biodiversity Indicators 2019

This document supports
A4. Global biodiversity impacts of UK economic activity /
sustainable consumption

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A4. Global biodiversity impacts of UK economic activity / sustainable consumption

Summary

Additional research work undertaken in 2018/19.

Indicator Description

Indicator under development. Production and consumption in the UK has an impact on the natural environment beyond our shores through the import and export of goods and services. A range of research work has been undertaken, but it has not at present been possible to develop an indicator.

Following the adoption of the [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020](#) by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2010, the UK biodiversity indicators were [reviewed](#), and a programme of work was put in place to develop and refine the indicator set for future reporting to the CBD. In this review, a small number of gaps were identified where there were no current indicators for particular CBD goals and targets. One such gap related to indicators for reporting on global impacts of consumption and production.

Progress to date

Research has been undertaken to (i) assess how patterns of UK consumption impact on the key drivers of biodiversity change overseas and (ii) identify options for mitigating those impacts. This research includes:

- Analysis and modelling of trade pathways and supply chains for goods and services in order to identify important sources of production; and
- Identification of the potential impact of key production systems and products on biodiversity.

An assessment framework has been developed to provide information on the direct and indirect links between consumption of goods and services in the UK and the environmental impacts that occur due to the production of these goods and services in other countries. A [global trade model](#) that retains product-level production detail and quantitative links to associated environmental impacts has been developed to allow top-down assessment of potential impacts. This model facilitates the selection of priority commodities and regions which can then be investigated in more detail using a case-study approach. [Further research](#) was undertaken in 2014 to develop this approach at a Scotland level.

During 2018/19, work was undertaken under contract to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) to review literature and test the extension of multi-regional input-output modelling to measure environmental impact. The aim was to develop an indicator to support the 25 Year Environment Plan. Results of the contract are being peer-reviewed.

Relevance

Production and consumption in the UK has an impact on the natural environment beyond our shores through the import and export of goods and services. Each of the countries of the UK has introduced or is introducing policies to promote sustainable production and consumption and thereby reduce our impact on biodiversity and promote the sustainable use of natural resources.

The 25 Year Environment Plan highlights the government's commitment to "*leave a lighter footprint on the global environment by enhancing sustainability and supporting zero deforestation supply chains*" in a way which "*avoids improving our domestic environment at the expense of the environment globally.*" In order to fulfil this commitment, a greater understanding of the global environmental impacts of UK consumption is required.

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Goals and Targets

Aichi Targets for which this is a primary indicator

Strategic Goal A. Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society.



Target 4: By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

Aichi Targets for which this is a relevant indicator

None

Web links for further information

| Reference | Title | Website |
|---|--|---|
| Defra | 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan |
| Defra-funded research study | West, C., Dawkins, E., Croft, S., Brugere, C., Sheate, W. & Raffaelli, D. (2013). Measuring the impacts on global biodiversity of goods and services imported into the UK. Final Report for Defra. April 2013. | http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&ProjectID=17829&FromSearch=Y&Publisher=1&SearchText=globalbiodiversity&SortString=ProjectCode&SortOrder=Asc&Paging=10#Description |
| Defra-funded research study | tbc | Currently being peer reviewed |
| Scottish Natural Heritage and Joint Nature Conservation Committee funded research study | Croft, S., Dawkins, E., & West, C. (2014). Assessing physical trade flows of materials of biological origin to and from Scotland. JNCC Report No. 533. ISSN 0963 8901. | http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6847 |

This indicator is available at: jncc.gov.uk/ukbi-A4

Last updated: September 2019

Latest data: N/A