

Global Leaf Biodiversity Risk Assessment



In 2022 we have commissioned The Biodiversity Consultancy¹ to conduct a Biodiversity Risk Assessment, mapping our contracted farmers against five global Biodiversity indicators and categorising them based on Low, Medium & High risk.

The Biodiversity Consultancy assessed data from 69,200 of our contracted farmers, representing 91.5% of BAT's contracted farmers in the 2021 crop year. Farmers were assessed against five global databases and tools for global biodiversity risk indicators²:

- Risk against the Ecosystem Intactness Index³
- Proximity to World Heritage Sites (WHS) and/or Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites⁴
- Proximity to protected areas and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)⁴
- Risk against STAR Threat Abatement⁵
- Risk against STAR Restoration⁵

Indicator databases include 269,904 protected sites, 142,577 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN⁶) Red List Species, and 16,356 Key Biodiversity Areas.

The results show that, based on a combined Biodiversity Risk Score, 98% of farms (96.4% of the total assessed farmed area) were classified as low biodiversity risk. High risk areas were identified in Brazil and Sri Lanka. Medium biodiversity risk areas were found in Brazil, Kenya and Venezuela, representing less than 1% of the total farm area assessed in each country.

One of the most relevant indicators assessed is the proximity to World Heritage Sites (WHS) and/or Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites. This shows that there are a total of 127 farmers [0.2%] with farms covering 974 hectares [0.3%] near or adjacent to WHS and AZE areas. 854 farmers [1.2%], covering 9,027 hectares of land [2.8% of the total farmland assessed], are near or adjacent to protected areas or Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA). In total there are 10,001 hectares near critical biodiversity areas.

Sites were also assessed using the STAR indicator, which stands for Species Threat Abatement and Restoration. This is a biodiversity metric based on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, which combines spatial data on species, the threats they face and their risk of extinction. STAR is used to indicate where threat abatement (STAR_T) and habitat restoration (STAR_R) actions have the potential to contribute to a reduction in species extinction risk at specific locations.

The results show a relatively low level of assessed risk to areas of high biodiversity significance. Seventy-five hectares are classified with high STAR_T significance and 1 hectare with high STAR_R significance. This means that farmers are in regions with high significance for threatened or endemic species of birds, mammals and/or amphibia; it does not mean the farmers are causing the threat or damaging the environment but that there is increased risk or significance to their activities.

In the next phase, we will be working with the respective BAT Leaf Operations on understanding the individual risk drivers at farmer level and developing management plans to mitigate those risks.

We are also working on a Biodiversity Operating Standard that aims to describe the main expectations all BAT tobacco suppliers are required to meet on biodiversity risk management from tobacco farming, including operational requirements and procedures they must follow in meeting the BAT no-deforestation targets.

¹ <https://www.thebiodiversityconsultancy.com/>

² Protected Area, Key Biodiversity Area, and Species data reproduced and incorporated under licence from the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool Alliance (IBAT) (<https://www.ibat-alliance.org/>). IBAT is provided by BirdLife International, Conservation International, IUCN and UNEP-WCMC. Contact ibat@ibat-alliance.org for further information

³ The Society for Conservation Biology (<https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/cons.12692>)

⁴ Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) (<https://www.ibat-alliance.org/the-data?locale=en>)

⁵ See attached evidence in <https://www.ibat-alliance.org/pdf/star-industry-briefing-note.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>