

How can Key Biodiversity Areas be useful for the private sector?



Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are sites of importance for the global persistence of biodiversity. They are identified using a standard set of 11 criteria based on scientifically-derived thresholds. Sites that are KBAs have a globally significant proportion of a population of one or more species, or a globally significant amount of an ecosystem or site of ecological integrity. The criteria and thresholds were developed through several years of consultation in the conservation community and are published as an [IUCN standard](#). The KBA criteria can be applied to all species or ecosystems in terrestrial, freshwater, marine and subterranean realms. As a result, KBAs provide a standardised method for identifying globally important sites for biodiversity conservation that can be applied in all countries, and provide a standard metric for comparison between countries and regions.

KBAs are recognised by the International Finance Corporation [Performance Standard 6](#) and by the Equator Principles as likely Critical Habitat. The [Banks and Biodiversity](#) coalition recognise KBAs as No-Go areas under their policy area 3. Several banks have developed their own safeguarding standards that recognise KBAs as critical habitat or no-go areas. More than 3,500 companies are using KBAs to guide their activities and assess corporate risk through the use of the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool ([IBAT](#)). The designation of a site as a KBA does not prescribe how it should be managed, but the site managers are urged to manage the site in a way that ensures the stability or increase of the species or ecosystem that triggers KBA status.

The private sector should be using KBAs because:

- KBAs are used to guide safeguarding policy, corporate risk and investment decisions
- KBAs are measured with standardised criteria, providing comparability across all countries
- KBAs are identified nationally using data on the distribution of biodiversity elements and have underlying data confirming the trigger species/ecosystem is present at a site
- Published KBAs are mapped and data stored in the [World Database of KBAs](#) and the underlying data are readily available for commercial use through IBAT.
- Not all KBAs have been identified yet, but companies should be requesting KBA assessments be made in and around concession areas when engaging biodiversity consultants to undertake EIA and ESIA work
- KBAs are recognised by international conventions as important sites for biodiversity conservation
- KBAs are being used to guide protected area expansion in countries – their avoidance reduces risk
- [Guidelines](#) on business and KBAs are available as a tool for the private sector.

To find out more visit www.keybiodiversityareas.org.