

# Biodiversity screening

## Business implications and relevance

- Identification of potential biodiversity risks forms an integral part of project due diligence.
- Biodiversity screening helps businesses understand potential risks of new projects, as well as providing critical information for acquisitions and mergers.
- Early screening can save time and resources later, enabling avoidance of the most serious risks and efficiently focusing impact assessments.

## What is a biodiversity screening?

A biodiversity screening is a type of due diligence. It assesses potential risks and opportunities from biodiversity in a project's area of interest, based on a rapid desktop evaluation. Expert interpretation of global biodiversity datasets (which are of increasingly high quality) is supplemented – when appropriate – by discreet expert consultation and analysis of site-specific datasets. Screenings are undertaken with reference to company, regulatory and lender standards (Figure 1 overleaf). A biodiversity screening is quick and affordable, so is often conducted at very early project stages to help inform design and to scope subsequent assessments.



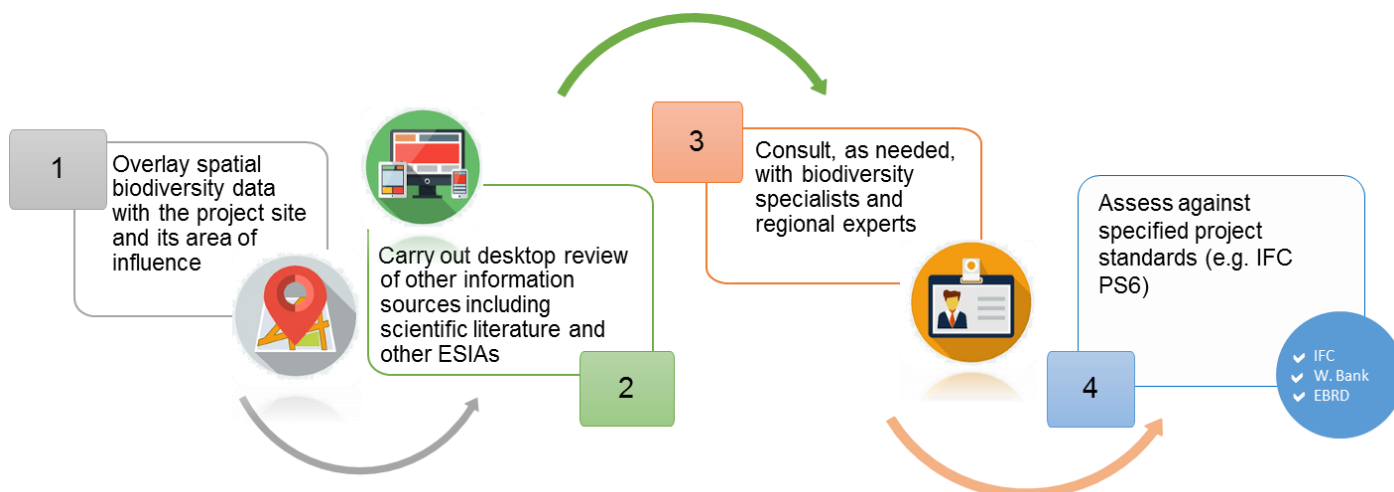
A screening helps identify important biodiversity, such as small range species and threatened ecosystems, that is likely to occur within an area of interest. In turn, this enables developers to understand and manage risks and opportunities.

## At a glance

- A screening is a rapid desk-based assessment of the biodiversity-related risks of operating in a particular area
- A screening uses global biodiversity datasets and, through specialist interpretation, provides a risk profile of the area
- Early screening is cost-effective and helps to:
  - Assess alignment with company and lender standards;
  - Inform project location and design decisions;
  - Focus, and reduce costs of, impact assessment and mitigation;
  - Understand liabilities as part of acquisitions or mergers.

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**Figure 1:** A screening uses available biodiversity data and, through specialist interpretation, develops a profile of project risks and opportunities in the area of interest.



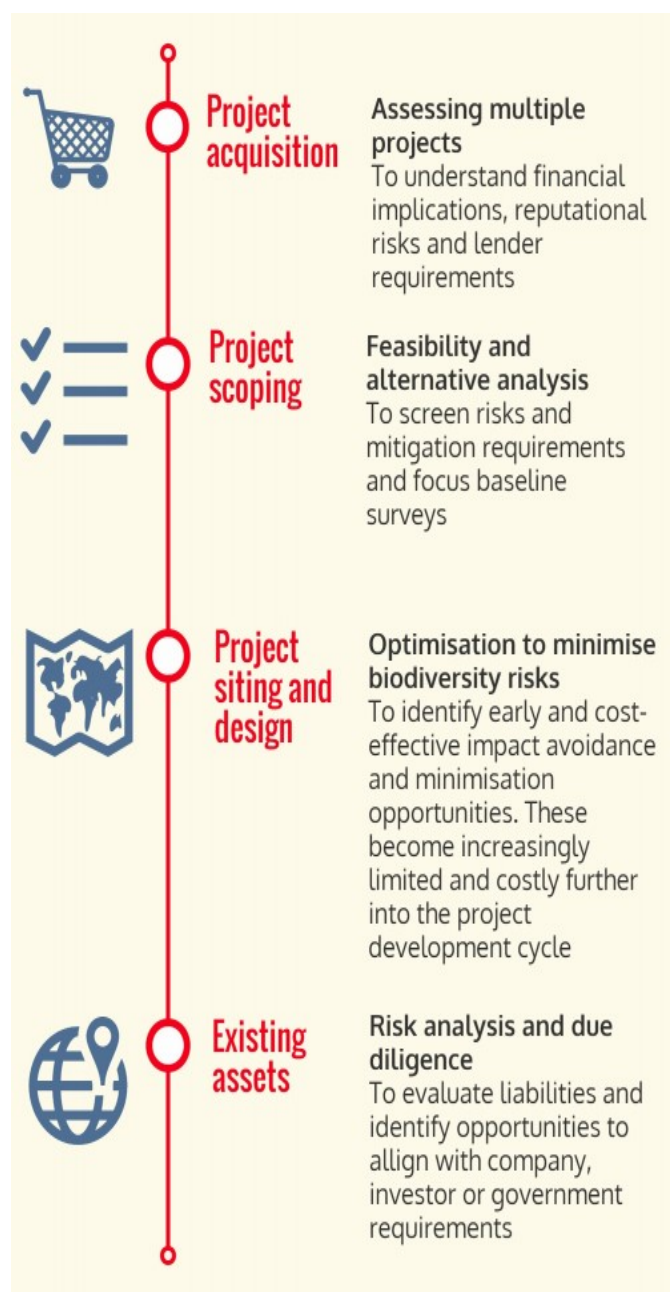
## Why do a biodiversity screening?

Secures investment	Reduces costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps align projects with an increasing number of <b>lender requirements</b> (e.g. International Finance Corporation, World Bank) and government policies.</li> <li>Identifies potential <b>show stoppers</b>, but also <b>low risk alternatives</b>, allowing sufficient time for mitigation planning, helping reassure developers and finance lenders.</li> <li>Increases project <b>operational readiness</b> through integration of biodiversity considerations from the outset.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps prioritise and guide baseline survey effort towards understanding highest project risks, avoiding costly and often unnecessary broad-scale surveys of all species.</li> <li>Focuses the ESIA on mitigation for the key biodiversity risks within the project's area of influence.</li> </ul>
Reduces uncertainty	Increases social acceptance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies implications for financing and timelines of biodiversity-related risks, early in project conception and scoping.</li> <li>Increases cost effectiveness by reducing mitigation and compensation costs and liabilities.</li> <li>Avoids unpredictable costs associated with project re-design where major biodiversity risks are identified late in the project development cycle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates diligence and commitment towards environmental sustainability, contributing to social licence to operate.</li> <li>Helps foster a positive relationship with local stakeholders by identifying important biodiversity and ecosystem services for community livelihoods and well-being.</li> </ul>

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## When to screen for biodiversity risks?

**Figure 2:** Biodiversity screening is valuable at many project stages, providing a cost-effective tool for assessing risks and opportunities throughout and beyond a project's development.



## How is a screening carried out?

TBC uses the best available data for species, ecosystems, protected areas and internationally recognised areas (such as Key Biodiversity Areas), available primarily through the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool ([IBAT](#))<sup>1</sup>. These data provide an invaluable, cost-effective means to assess biodiversity-related risks. The datasets are increasingly high-quality but require specialist interpretation and cross-referencing with other data sources to fully understand project biodiversity risks<sup>2</sup>. Biodiversity identified as potentially present in a project area is assessed against the project concept and any requirements (e.g. national regulations, lender performance standards or a corporate biodiversity policy), to identify potential risks and opportunities (Figure 2).



Specialist interpretation of biodiversity data helps identify project risks associated with biodiversity, such as species of global significance or local importance.

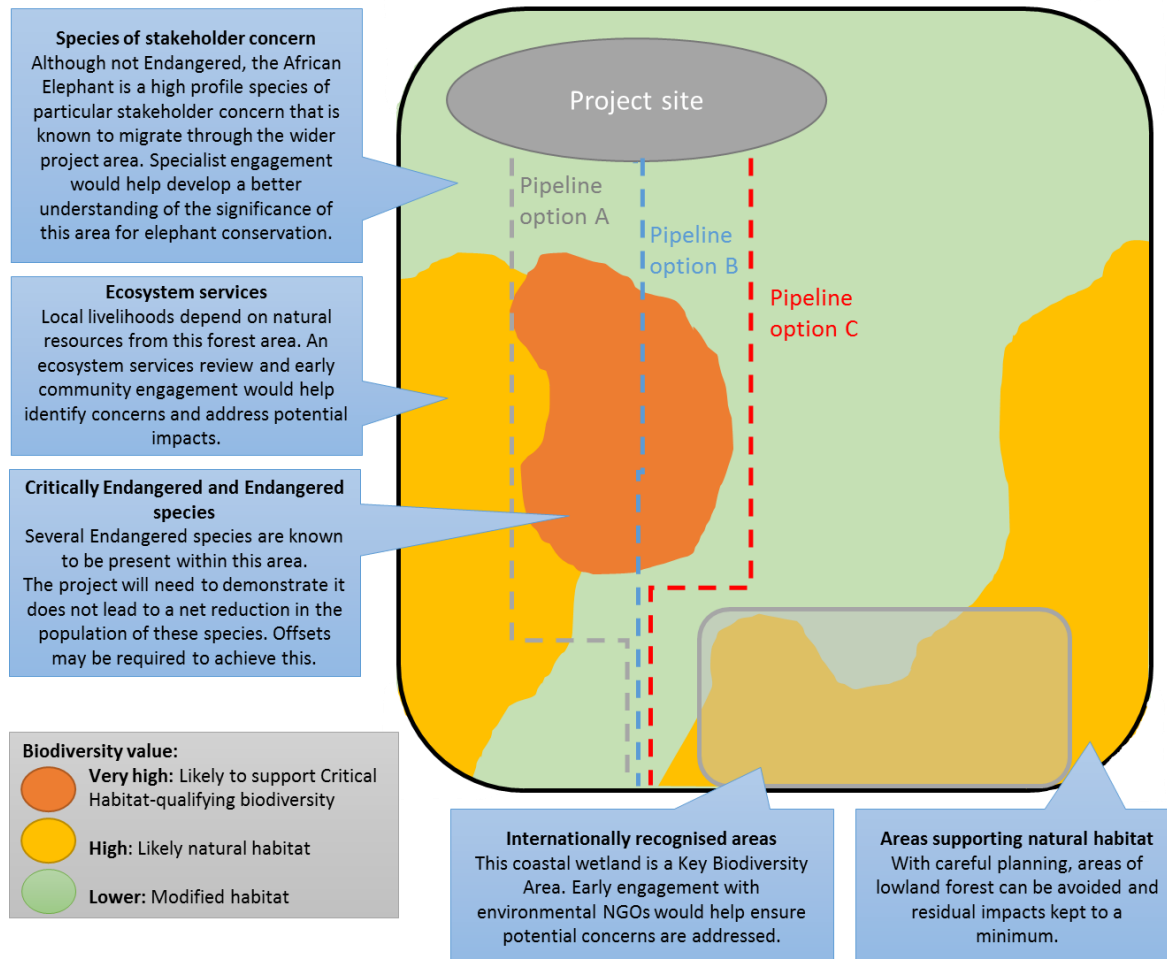
<sup>1</sup> [IBAT](#) is a tool available to business subscribers to assess biodiversity risks, developed and maintained by a partnership among BirdLife International, Conservation International, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

<sup>2</sup> See [Guidelines for Appropriate Uses of the IUCN Red List for Business](#) (2016).



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**Figure 3:** A biodiversity screening provides a quick overview of potential project risks and implications, tailored to the specific needs of a company. Screening can also help inform decisions on project infrastructure design. In this pipeline routing scenario, option C avoids areas of high biodiversity value, significantly reducing project mitigation liability and risks.



**The Biodiversity Consultancy** works together with industry-leading clients to achieve an ecologically sustainable basis for development by tackling complex biodiversity challenges and by supporting positive conservation outcomes. Contact us to find out how we can help you to:

- Identify and avoid risks before they occur
- Deliver projects on time and at cost
- Transform environmental challenges into opportunities
- Demonstrate shared value to stakeholders
- Build a positive brand and sustainable business



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