

Complaint: UNEP backing to TNFD has undermined and worked against environmental defenders, rights holders and civil society groups

Complainants:

Rainforest Action Network, Forests & Finance coalition, Global Forest Coalition, BankTrack, Milieudefensie, Third World Network, Women's Earth and Climate Action Network, Friends of the Earth International, Indigenous Environmental Network and Movimento pelo Soberania Popular no Mineração.

Complaint Summary

UNEP has undermined environmental defenders and other UN policies

This complaint maintains that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has breached several of its own policies in its support for the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) and that it has failed to uphold principles of good governance, international human rights frameworks, the rights of environmental defenders, gender equity and access-to-information rights.

UNEP was one of four co-founders and an important funder of the TNFD. The decision-making body of the TNFD, the TNFD taskforce, is made up of 40 (previously 34) corporate executives who developed recommendations for how business should disclose how biodiversity issues impact their profitability (financial materiality). The framework is heavily flawed and has received ample criticism from some civil society organizations (CSOs) and rights-holder organizations. But UNEP - and others - have promoted the recommendations of this corporate taskforce and at times essentially promoted a framework developed by corporations, for corporations as the basis of future regulation of business.

About the complainants

The complainants are civil society and rights-holder organizations and networks who have been advocating, campaigning or supporting environmental defenders on issues related to corporate and financier harms to biodiversity and human rights. Some complainants are also advocating on specific cases involving companies whose executives sit on the TNFD or more broadly work on advocacy on financial sector issues in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, international human rights frameworks, fair good governance and/or environmental defender-centric approaches.

Concerns about the project

The primary concerns are: 1) UNEP has undermined, and worked against, environmental defenders, rights holders, grassroots women's organizations and civil society groups in its support for the TNFD; and 2) UNEP has promoted discriminatory practices by failing to adopt basic good governance or to require the TNFD to adhere to evidence-based practices and through allowing extremely flawed project practices that empowered corporations but sidelined environmental defenders, rights holders, women's organizations and civil society groups.

Scope of concern

The TNFD can be understood as a 'global' initiative.

Correspondence about this complaint

Please contact Shona Hawkes, Senior Advisor, Rainforest Action Network on behalf of complainants. Their preferred contact is via email: shona@ran.org. Their Signal/Whats App/Phone is +61 413 100 864.

Part 1 - Key complaint:

1. UNEP has undermined the work of environmental defenders, rights holders, women's organizations and civil society groups through its co-founding, funding and serving on the stewardship council of the TNFD. The TNFD has amplified and resourced executives from 40 corporations to determine the TNFD recommendations and promote them heavily. UNEP was **a key architect** of the TNFD's creation and served a governance role – this should have ensured a responsibility for any initiative it is involved in to respect UNEP's own policies. Points 2-11 examine this further.
2. UNEP has undermined the basic principles of fair governance by supporting a TNFD taskforce made up solely of executives from corporations. The taskforce does not include government officials, scientists, rights holders, grassroots women or CSOs or even other facets of the business community, such as smallholder farmers.
3. UNEP, as a co-founder of the TNFD, has failed to ensure transparency regarding who **appointed the TNFD taskforce members**, including if this involved UNEP staff.
4. UNEP has undermined calls for policy solutions through the systematic empowering of, investing in and amplification of corporations to describe what they believe will change their behavior. Instead, environmental defenders, rights holders and civil society groups see policies that allow for **liability and redress** as key to ending business complicity in the biodiversity crisis. Noting that other UN agencies - particularly initiatives linked with business and human rights - have emphasized the role of accountability in shifting corporate behavior based on various analyses and research inputs.
5. UNEP has undermined the efforts of environmental defenders, rights holders and civil society groups trying to press for fair outcomes for prior or ongoing risks or harms, by consenting to the appointing of many senior executives to the TNFD taskforce from **company groups facing serious environmental and human rights concerns**, presenting these companies as defacto leaders on nature the TNFD has undermined environmental defenders. See Table 3, p. 18-20, for a list.
6. UNEP failed to perform basic due diligence and does not appear to have required any environmental or human rights **screening by the TNFD** for its taskforce members. It also did not **consult with** environmental defenders or others raising current or recent concerns, formal grievances or legal cases against company groups to determine if they consented.

7. UNEP has endorsed, and actively promoted, corporate capture by endorsing the TNFD in national and international policy discussions. This amounts to **promoting a view that it is legitimate for corporations to write the blueprint of future laws that will regulate them.**
8. UNEP failed to perform a **gender analysis** of the TNFD's proposals or specifically consult with grassroots women's organizations.
9. UNEP failed to require the TNFD to follow **an evidence-based approach.** While it facilitated hundreds of opportunities for companies to pilot their ease of reporting and case studies on how a company should approach its internal assessment of risk using the TNFD framework - there was not a single process to check the TNFD's recommendations against case studies of companies engaged in environmental and human rights harm. The TNFD did not undertake nor rely on any research into what works, or doesn't, to shift company behavior. While the TNFD is not, and has never claimed to be evidence based, it is frequently promoted in policy discussions as if it were.
10. UNEP did not make any serious or credible efforts to **engage** with the many civil society groups raising concerns about the TNFD over a two year period. At no point did UNEP, the TNFD or any other related body inform these groups if the TNFD had a **grievance process** or complaint mechanism. No reference to a complaint mechanism appeared on its website or in other material.
11. The TNFD actively or implicitly **excluded environmental defenders**, rights holder and civil society voices through biased and **flawed consultation processes.**
 - a. By one estimate, up to **98% of feedback to the TNFD was made in secret.** There is no ability to examine what evidence was presented to the TNFD, what was ignored and which issues were not discussed.
 - b. The TNFD did **not communicate in a way that was understandable or accessible** to most environmental defenders, rights holders, women's organizations or many civil society organizations. Since April 2022, many civil society organizations have called for the TNFD to provide sample reports of what it proposed. This was to make it easy to identify what was proposed, to compare against existing initiatives and better understand its practical purpose. Despite a budget in the millions of dollars the TNFD never did this.
 - c. The TNFD largely **did not have open consultation processes.** Its primary mechanism for consultation was through the TNFD forum - which was only open to groups who "[consent to the TNFD Secretariat to use your institution's name and brand identity on our website signaling your support for the TNFD](#)". This actively discouraged critical voices.
 - d. The TNFD continues to operate 'working groups' at national and other levels whose **members have never been disclosed**, even when requested. Again, this makes it impossible to know who is involved in these groups; if they are biased in favor of corporations, including those facing serious allegations of harm.

The ongoing failure of the TNFD to reform its poor consultation processes – such as 11. a) – c) – led to many groups being actively excluded from consultation, determining that their views

were not wanted or valued or created such an undue burden to even understand the TNFD's proposals that organizations could not justify the time it would take to provide input.

We further raise this complaint as it is also important to understand if the issues encountered with the TNFD are or are not systemic within UNEP, including UNEP-FI, with regards to initiatives involving the finance or corporate sectors.

Breaches in UNEP Policies

UNEP breaches its Environmental Defenders Policy

The [UNEP Environmental Defenders Policy](#) explicitly recognizes that “the disparity in power, resources and information available to powerful commercial enterprises and businesses as opposed to environmental rights defenders further contributes to a culture of indifference and even impunity with regard to environmental harms and the people they affect.” (p.2). It commits that “*UN Environment will...advocate for better protection of environmental rights and the people standing up for these rights.*” (p.2). Additionally, it outlines that the expertise of environmental defenders should inform the work of UN Environment in all relevant forums: “*UN Environment will develop long-term collaborations and relationships with local, national, regional and international networks of environmental defenders, including women human rights defenders; to invite their expertise and experience to inform the work of UN Environment in all relevant forums, conferences, consultations; and, to ensure meaningful representation of environmental defenders, including women human rights defenders, from diverse regions.*”(p.6).

1) UNEP did not “advocate for better protection of environmental rights and the people standing up for these rights” because it undermined environmental defenders and civil society groups.

UNEP permitted at least 45% of company executives to be appointed to the TNFD from corporations facing allegations of serious environmental or human rights concerns (see Table 3 in Additional evidence and information, p.18-20.). It is unclear who specifically decided taskforce appointments, if there was any due diligence screening and it certainly did not include consulting with environmental defenders bringing complaints against the company on their views of if it was appropriate for the company to be represented on the taskforce. The taskforce actively markets itself as comprising executives from companies who represent “*a market capitalisation of over US\$2.3 trillion, over US\$20.6 trillion in assets under management.*” There are no executives who do not come from large corporations.

In May 2023, three Goldman Prize winners and 62 organizations and networks - whose members include Indigenous Peoples, community organizations and women environmental defenders in over 85 countries - wrote an open letter to the TNFD Co-Chairs¹. This stated: “*The TNFD taskforce is made up of 40 global corporations and there is no objective criteria for how*

¹ <https://forestsandfinance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Joint-CSO-letter-to-the-TNFD.pdf>

the taskforce members are appointed. These members include many businesses that stand accused of serious environmental and human rights harms and that have persistently failed to respond to environmental defenders to change their ways.” The letter raised ‘profound concerns’ with the work of the TNFD including its processes, its recommendations, key omissions and its distraction from the importance of justice in outcomes for biodiversity.²

A year earlier, 28 organizations and networks had written to the TNFD raising similar concerns. This included concerns regarding exclusion of rights holders and Global South CSOs from the TNFD’s consultation process, the exclusion of human rights, the need for the TNFD to explicitly require business to report on actual and potential adverse risks and impacts to nature and people and concerns that it is setting a lower standard than existing corporate initiatives in high-risk industries. It noted: *“We write this letter with the caveat that many of our organizations have not engaged as directly with TNFD and its documents as we would have liked. This is not because we are indifferent to the need to redirect the trillions of dollars that are flowing from companies and financial institutions into activities that are driving the nature crisis and the human rights crisis that underpins it. It is because, to date, TNFD’s consultation process has not been designed to be truly accessible to rights holders, grassroots organizations or broader civil society groups. We want to understand what TNFD is proposing, to test its recommendations against real-world case studies of corporate-led harms to nature and people, and to trust that our expertise and recommendations will be valued and considered.”*³

2) UNEP did not “invite [environmental defender] expertise and experience to inform the work of UN Environment in relevant forums, conferences and consultations.”

The taskforce – the decision-making body of the TNFD - itself excludes environmental defenders. It is solely comprised of corporate representatives. It does not include environmental defenders, civil society organizations, rights holders, academics, grassroots women’s groups, government officials or scientists. It does not even represent the business sector - it is limited to global corporations, and excludes small-holder farmers, small and medium enterprises, co-operatives or unions.

The taskforce undermines the normalization of fair public participation as articulated in agreements such as the Escazu Agreement, particularly Article 7. As the Escazu Agreement applies to states in Latin America and the Caribbean, it should have set the basic expectations for any global initiative that included company groups that operate in these regions. In addition, UNEP should explicitly seek to normalize these standards, if not a higher standard. The TNFD systematically failed to have an appropriate decision-making process. This could be explored at length, but in sum, for example:

- It did not allow ‘effective participation’ of the public. Even financial sector insiders faced confusion as to the TNFD’s position on fundamental issues such as double materiality.⁴

² Of the various points raised, only the point on lobbying was amended in the final framework.

³ <https://forestsandfinance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Letter-on-TNFD-feedback-1-1.pdf>

⁴ This confusion was particularly apparent during TNFD’s consultations prior to September 2023 (for example see [here](#)). However, even today there are ample examples of resources published by investors, analysts or consultants – often serving as ‘explainers’ of TNFD - that state that the TNFD is based on

- It did not provide the public with the necessary information in a clear, timely and comprehensive manner, to give effect to its right to participate in the decision-making process. This could be extensively elaborated but to state briefly: Firstly, the TNFD itself did not really have a public consultation process. Almost all of its consultation was via its 'TNFD Forum' process. This required groups to register as a TNFD Forum member. This was only open to groups who "[consent to the TNFD Secretariat to use your institution's name and brand identity on our website signaling your support for the TNFD](#)". This excluded groups who were critical of the TNFD or simply unsure of their views on it. While the TNFD Secretariat did have some 'dialogues' beyond the TNFD Forum, these represented a tiny fraction in time and resources compared to those dedicated to companies. For example, the TNFD facilitated 200 company or related pilots to test the ease of reporting against its recommendations. It had no process to test its recommendations against cases (real or anonymized) of biodiversity or human rights harm to identify if its recommendations would allow loopholes, misinformation or undermine environmental defenders. Secondly, the TNFD did not provide clear information. Since at least April 2022, civil society organizations requested the TNFD provide examples of its proposed sample reporting. This would allow grassroots groups to 'see' what a TNFD report would look like for a company in different sectors, different type of activities. Groups maintained this would be the easiest, most effective way for groups to understand TNFD's proposals, interpret what it would mean in the context of their work, and provide feedback. Thirdly, the lack of transparency of the feedback process meant that civil society groups could not readily identify issues raised and which groups were excluded. For example, there is no record of if any grassroots women's organizations made submissions speaking specifically to the implications of the TNFD's recommendations. Forth, as raised in the previous section, the taskforce ignored repeated requests raised since at least April 2022 to make consultation processes accessible. This included denying persistent requests to provide examples of what a proposed TNFD report would look like.⁵ Despite CSOs emphasizing that this was one of the most effective ways for environmental defenders and grassroots organizations to understand what the TNFD was proposing.
- The TNFD itself had no grievance mechanism or grievance process articulated in any of its public information materials. At no point were any of the signatories to this complaint provided information that: i) the TNFD had a grievance mechanism; or ii) encouraged to file a complaint through a TNFD grievance mechanism

double materiality. For example, see articles by [Robeco](#), [BDO](#), [Alpha Asset & Wealth Management consulting](#)

Accessed 7 October 2024. The TNFD website [homepage](#) writes: "The Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) has developed a set of disclosure recommendations and guidance that encourage and enable business and finance to assess, report and act on their nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities." Many people reasonably assume that 'nature-related impacts' or 'nature-related risks' would refer to a business' impacts or risk on nature. Most are unfamiliar that the wording 'nature-related risks' is specifically defined by the TNFD – outlined in its separate 85 page [glossary document](#) as the risks *posed to an organization* from its or broader societies, impacts on nature. There is no definition provided of 'nature-related impacts'.

⁵ The TNFD provided some case study examples but these only examined how a company should approach the TNFD assessments and reporting. It did not include a sample report.

The Global Forest Coalition – a coalition of over 135 member NGOs and Indigenous Peoples Organizations in 76 countries - noted in August 2022: “[TNFD] is hijacking the broader conversation about how to divert the trillions of dollars in financing that is driving, and profiting from, the destruction of nature and human rights abuses. This [TNFD’s proposal] is light years away from the solutions that the victims of corporate abuses and nature harms are calling for.”⁶

The Women’s Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN) also stated: “We are incredibly concerned that UN agencies are backing, and funding, TNFD, which is not a multistakeholder initiative— it is written by business for business as usual. There is [...] no gender analysis, no equal seat at the table for those on the front lines of the climate and biodiversity crises. There is no discussion of accountability, or mechanisms to address harms and grievances to impacted communities or ecosystems. We urgently need real solutions that are bold and transformative. We are in a catastrophic moment, and cannot further initiatives that enable profit over people and nature.”⁷

In May 2024, Bryan Bixcul, Maya Tz’utujil person and staff member of Indigenous rights organization Cultural Survival – outlined various critiques of TNFD before [writing](#) that “the TNFD is nothing more than the private sector’s efforts to institutionalize their avoidance of human rights and biodiversity responsibilities”. A November 2023 article, [‘Moving beyond a tokenistic participation of Indigenous Peoples in nature financing’](#), written by an anonymous Indigenous author, critiques the TNFD - and various other initiatives - approach to Indigenous Peoples’ rights. On TNFD, the article emphasizes that it fails to respect the forms of disclosure emphasized by Indigenous Peoples or to protect and respect their rights. The author writes: “To answer whether the framework would be effective for uncovering environmental damage on Indigenous territories, one simply needs to ask: *What would self-disclosure look like for a company whose business model is reliant on displacing Indigenous Peoples from their territories and destroying their territories, either directly or through their value chains?* Most likely, the company would use their TNFD report to greenwash, by claiming that they “engaged” some group of Indigenous people, without providing the transparency required.”

Note, UNEP-FI in particular has existed for over two decades. It has financial institutions as members but does not appear to have any environmental defender reference body. This raises an additional question of if the issues encountered with TNFD stem from broader systemic issues within UNEP.

⁶ <https://forestsandfinance.org/news/civil-society-groups-say-un-backed-tnfd-proposal-risks-opening-a-new-frontier-for-corporate-greenwashing-on-nature/>

⁷ <https://forestsandfinance.org/news/civil-society-groups-say-un-backed-tnfd-proposal-risks-opening-a-new-frontier-for-corporate-greenwashing-on-nature/>

UNEP breaches of Gender Equality and the Environment Policy⁸

As a result of the lack of the implementation of UNEP's gender policy, the TNFD's 'gender policy' perspective was, to the best of our knowledge, limited to ensuring that there was equality in appointing staff and the TNFD members.

UNEP's approach to the TNFD appears vastly out of step with approaches in the [Handbook on gender mainstreaming for gender equality results](#) prepared by UN Women for the UN System Coordination Division which ensures inter-agency operability. It appears explicitly out of step with key principles and approaches. This notes the ECOSOC definition of gender mainstreaming from 1997 describing it as: *'...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.'*

The handbook also notes as a 'central principle' of gender mainstreaming that (p.12): *"The strategy requires explicit attention to both women and men, and diverse gender identities, ensuring that they can participate in, influence, and benefit from development policy and practice"* and *"Successful implementation requires that the knowledge, concerns, priorities, experiences, capacities and contributions of women, men, and gender-diverse people are made an explicit and integral part of all policy and planning processes, to inform and influence the direction of policymaking, planning and outcomes."*

- i) The taskforce did not include any gender analysis of its recommendations in any of its four drafts nor in its final framework.
- ii) The taskforce did not have any systematic consultation process to engage with women environmental defenders or grassroots organizations focused on the rights of women or other marginalized genders.
- iii) The taskforce did not provide any gender disaggregated statistics – for example, disclosure of the number of submissions discussing gender dynamics of the TNFD process or drafts.
- iv) The taskforce did not have any process to share feedback provided by gender experts or grassroots organizations if any was received. This also prevented others from learning from, and amplifying, gender-related concerns.
- v) The taskforce did not have a gender focal point and did not appear to have any process to engage with organizations representing women and other marginalized genders despite gender being a hallmark of the Convention on Biological Diversity processes.

⁸ https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

vi) The taskforce includes BlackRock despite over 700 feminist groups successfully rallying against BlackRock's partnership with UN Women over its social and environmental record – which led UN Women to withdraw the partnership.

Without a gender analysis, there has been no research to determine if the TNFD's recommendations will be detrimental to women or undermine existing women's groups priorities. The Women's Earth and Climate Action Network and the Global Forest Coalition - both networks with a strong gender focus – have spoken out against the TNFD's processes and recommendations and should be taken extremely seriously.

UNEP breaches of its Environmental and Social Standards Framework

According to UNEP, its [Environmental and Social Standards Framework](#) “applies to all UNEP-funded programmes and projects, UNEP-administered MEAs, implementing partners, executing agencies and contractors.”

Among other objectives, it notes that UNEP programmes and projects will:

- Meet certain provisions on gender, including gender analysis, promote equal access to and control over productive resources and empower and prioritize the needs of marginalized women and men of diverse socioeconomic contexts. Which, as outlined above, the TNFD has not met.
- On accountability, it states that UNEP will promote compliance with legal norms and standards and also stress the active engagement of marginalized groups. However, the TNFD framework itself does not exclude companies that are facing credible or proven allegations of breaking local, national or international law and fails to even recommend that profits gained from such activities should be surrendered. Not only did UNEP fail to ensure a taskforce that centered or even included environmental defenders, it permitted the appointment of multiple companies facing a host of environmental and human rights concerns (see Table 3, p.18-20). This also contradicts the principle to 'leave no one behind'.
- On sustainability and resilience, the framework states that UNEP will apply a precautionary approach to addressing significant environmental and social challenges. However, the TNFD's framework has facilitated controversial biodiversity offsets and promoted company self-reporting over alternatives such as accountability. The TNFD has maintained that it is appropriate that a framework written by corporations could be adopted into national or international law.

It also notes that: *“Effective stakeholder engagement is a cornerstone to achieving sustainable development. Meaningful engagement with stakeholders, including access to timely and relevant information...are key aspects of a human rights-based approach to programmes and projects. Government partners, civil society actors and organizations, private sector actors, trade unions, indigenous peoples, local communities and other stakeholders are important*

partners in this approach. Effective stakeholder engagement is also fundamental in combatting inequality and ensuring equity and non-discrimination across all programme and project areas.” The TNFD’s entire approach and allocation of resources appears anathema to this objective.

Annex IV on Access to Information under UNEP’s Environmental and Social Standards Framework notes that “*UNEP shall address the following elements in providing access to information on its projects and programmes:… Provision of relevant information in understandable forms and relevant local languages in an accessible and culturally appropriate manner, considering any specific needs of groups that may be disproportionately affected by programme or project activities or groups with specific information needs, such as due to disability, literacy, gender, mobility, language, and accessibility.*”

UNEP breaches of its [Access-to-information Policy](#)⁹

In September 2023, Rainforest Action Network estimated that up to 98% of feedback provided to the TNFD was made in secret. It noted: “TNFD states that it has received ‘over 3000 pieces of feedback’. However, only [around 60](#) pieces of feedback are public on its website.”¹⁰ In September 2022 it had [pointed out](#) that other similar processes, such as the ISSB, had a default provision of feedback being made public - with an option to submit feedback privately if requested.¹¹ Transparent consultation processes should be a basic expectation of any UNEP founded project undertaking public consultation.

As a result, there is no public record of: a) who provided feedback; b) what feedback they provided; c) which groups, including marginalized groups, were excluded from the process; and d) whose feedback was incorporated into revisions and whose was not. As such, there is no public record to allow analysis of if voices of global corporations were prioritized in the TNFD’s consultation processes compared to those of Indigenous Peoples, rural women, environmental defenders or youth. Our anecdotal evidence suggests that marginalized peoples were sidelined. Further, the TNFD did not provide access to information in a form or language understandable to environmental defenders, grassroots women organizations or other organizations. This included a failure to provide examples of what a proposed TNFD report would look like - despite this being a persistent request raised of the TNFD since at least April 2022.

UNEP potentially exacerbating economic inequalities

Embedded in the Convention on Biological Diversity is the notion of equity and common but fair and differentiated responsibilities. A critical backdrop to the COP 15 talks was the emerging debt crisis – with the IMF noting a [60% increase](#) in low-income countries at risk of default

⁹ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/9922/REVISED-access-to-information-policy-Jan-2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

¹⁰ <https://forestsandfinance.org/news/final-tnfd-framework-launching-september-18th-rainforest-action-network-response/>

For further discussion of the issue see:

https://www.banktrack.org/blog/planning_for_public_disclosures_through_hidden_closeddoor_processes#_

¹¹https://www.banktrack.org/blog/planning_for_public_disclosures_through_hidden_closeddoor_processes

compared to 2015. Questions and concerns have been [raised](#) (see [here](#) also) that in pricing nature-related risk the TNFD will lead to a [lowering of the credit rating](#) of some low-income countries (and formerly colonized countries) and thus increase the cost of capital in those same countries. There is also [research](#) to suggest that lower and middle-income countries will be more adversely impacted. By adding to their financial burden, this could perversely drive increased biodiversity loss if countries feel that in order to serve a higher financial burden and repayment they need to permit [environmentally harmful activities](#). This would be particularly perverse for countries who face biodiversity loss and increased economic hardship as a result of climate impacts they have done little to contribute to. Examples of research and evidence that supports these concerns is [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Though raised successive times, the TNFD and UNEP failed to take these concerns extremely seriously as they deserved - as they could directly violate the spirit of the Convention of Biological Diversity, which recognizes that economic and social development and eradication of poverty are the first and overriding priorities of the developing countries - in that it risks entrenching economic inequalities, penalizes countries hardest hit by climate chaos and which, through these economic consequences, perversely may motivate activities that harm biodiversity.

UNEP did not apply an evidence-based approach

Over the last decade, UN Special Rapporteurs and articulations of human rights frameworks in relation to business practices have sought to amplify the expertise and views of environmental defenders, as well as other rights holders, women and civil society organizations. Additionally, many of these findings are based on specific inquiries and research into existing practices of corporations and what works, or doesn't, to shift corporate behavior. At best, the TNFD is an effort to articulate that current financial-risk reporting as a requirement of company reporting and other corporate law should include financial risks or opportunities that may relate to biodiversity. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights have long determined that 'accountability' is a key pillar of change. The TNFD is incoherent with a rights-based framework. Additionally, so too is the appointment of company representatives to the TNFD taskforce when those companies are facing serious environmental and human rights concerns. The TNFD's framework also failed to adopt the recommendation of many CSOs to recommend grievance-list reporting – essentially the reporting of complaints about a company's environmental and human rights practices sufficiently serious to be elevated to management level. It is hard to argue why investors or the public benefit by being denied this information. As Table 3 on pages 18-20 shows, a significant number of companies represented on the TNFD taskforce are facing serious concerns. This is one example of the conflict of interests ever present in the TNFD.

Part 2 - Additional evidence and information

In this section, individual organizations have provided additional evidence and information to support Part 1 of this complaint. Rainforest Action Network has provided sections 1, 2, 3 and 4. Section 5 includes impact statements presented by various named complainants. The Forests &

Finance coalition has provided section 6, which collates materials produced by an array of organizations and individuals.

1 – The TNFD framework is counter to environmental defender priorities and other flaws

Final positions adopted by the TNFD corporate taskforce show the implications of undermining environmental defenders

In discussions with environmental defenders, rights holders, women’s groups or civil society organizations Rainforest Action Network found the table below the most tangible tool to describe what the TNFD does or does not do. This shows the gap between the TNFD and priorities often expressed by groups whose human rights or biodiversity are threatened by corporations.

Table 1: Common questions from environmental defenders, rights holders and CSOs How TNFD compares to key priorities of those on the frontlines of the biodiversity crisis	
Would a company or bank:	
Face legal consequences for environmental and human rights abuses?	No
Have to give up the profits it made from harmful activities and financing?	No
Have to provide remedy and redress to people or ecosystems harmed?	No
Disclose <i>where</i> it is operating, buying from or financing - so that people can know if a company or bank is linked to problems in their area?	No
Disclose complaints or allegations against it of serious environmental or human rights harms?	No
Report where it was linked to illegal practices or fined for illegal practices?	Mostly no (only if financially significant)

Even if the TNFD were only to be a disclosure initiative - the final framework is a far cry from the positions that could have been adopted. For example, tools to amplify community complaints or to respect their access to information.

Table 2: Examples of positions that could be adopted by a disclosure initiative vs. the TNFD position			
	Issue	Example of positions that could be adopted of a disclosure initiative	TNFD position

1	Community's right to know	Affected communities can know if a reporting company is operating in, sourcing from or financing activities in their area	X TNFD does not recommend reporting: geolocation, supplier lists, exclusion list/investee universe etc.
2	Materiality	Double materiality: Businesses disclose their impacts on biodiversity & impacts on nature-related issues on business.	X Baseline limited to enterprise value/single materiality.
3	Claims can be fact-checked on the ground	Public disclosure of datasets & other information allows for TNFD report claims to be independently checked against realities on the ground	X Basic positions (i.e. 1, 2, 4) & use of high-level metrics means that most claims reported cannot be independently fact-checked. Added to this is the use of many 'net' metrics that do not differentiate adverse or positive impacts.
4	Systemic reporting of complaints	Businesses systematically disclose a list of complaints or allegations (grievance list) it faces on its biodiversity & human rights practices.	X No. Noting collectively taskforce members can face dozens, if not hundreds, of allegations of abuses over the last 10 years.
5	Human rights	Human rights central to all parts of the TNFD and seen as fundamental to biodiversity outcomes.	? Recommends companies disclose human rights due diligence - but barriers to HR substantiation in the framework i.e. 1, 4, 6 & broader issues.
6	Remedy & redress	All reporting companies, including investors, establish a grievance mechanism & show that it is meets the UNGP criteria for effective grievance mechanisms. ¹²	X Invites organizations to report if they have grievance mechanisms - but

¹² <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/arp-note-meeting-effectiveness-criteria.pdf>

			doesn't appear to require them.
7	Lobbying	Businesses report their lobbying positions and practices on nature-related issues, including via industry groups.	? Some recommendation but vague.
8	Exclusion	There is a process to exclude/suspend companies involved in egregious practices, bad faith reporting or greenwashing.	X TNFD doesn't verify reports. There is no exclusion process.
	Commodification of nature	There is serious and systemic engagement with the recommendations of the IPBES values report - including the role that market-based thinking has placed in exacerbating biodiversity loss. ¹³	X TNFD's potential to escalate the commodification of nature through new 'nature markets' has never been interrogated. It also allows 'net' reporting i.e. that enables so-called offsets
	Profits from harm	Any profits connected to biodiversity or human rights harms are not retained - for example, through remedy or redress.	X Under TNFD, companies can keep 100% of profits made from biodiversity & human rights harms.
	Accountability	Companies reporting under TNFD clearly state that legal accountability is fundamental to 'transition risk' and endorse environmental defender-led work on corporate accountability laws on environment and human rights. TNFD definitively states that as a corporate written framework it should not be considered as the basis of future laws.	X There is a deep critique that TNFD is distracting from and undermining laws that would create actual risk for biodiversity harms.
<p>Misdirect: An additional risk is that TNFD will steer companies to act on biodiversity issues that are most financially impactful for their business NOT to focus on their worst impacts on biodiversity.</p>			

¹³ https://www.ipbes.net/media_release/Values_Assessment_Published

The TNFD adopts lower standards than existing laws and industry initiatives

The TNFD has typically adopted a far lower standard than industry initiatives long in place or even existing laws. For example, double materiality reporting is already law in a major global trading block (the EU) and is now a requirement of major Chinese stock exchanges. Where a voluntary initiative could be expected to match this standard globally, the TNFD is pushing a weaker standard. Similarly, the TNFD undermines the focus of due diligence away from ‘scale, scope and irremediability’ or starting with the most serious harms as prioritized under the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises enacted in 1976 to prioritize the most financially important risks to a business, not to nature.

The TNFD does not provide transparency on positive and negative impacts

An additional point that was repeatedly raised by civil society organizations since the first engagement with the TNFD Secretariat was on the issue of offsets. In early meetings, the TNFD Secretariat verbally promised to AmazonWatch that reporting under the TNFD would be separated between ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ impacts on nature. However, in its final version not only did TNFD apply a ‘materiality’ lens to its metrics reporting (meaning that the baseline is that a company only need report on metrics if the issue is financially significant to the company itself), it also adopted ‘net’ reporting on critical areas such as land use. This does not make it possible to identify, for example, if a company is expanding its land use – a vital question for equitable resource use and a risk-factor for land clearing, it also is key to avoid ‘externalities’ where companies push out communities from already cleared land and thereby force more land clearing. A larger problem of ‘net’ reporting is that it does not recommend a company disclose its actual impacts – allowing these to be invisibilized by offset purchases. Many civil society organizations had raised concerns about offsets with the TNFD. However, not only did it backtrack on these early verbal commitments, it had no concerted process that made it clear to civil society organizations who had raised the issue that offsets were being considered or discussed. This would have required reading hundreds of pages of draft TNFD documents – which included no case studies making it easy to identify what the TNFD proposed – looking through successive drafts, annexes and guidances. The mass civil society letter to the TNFD in May 2023 signed by 3 Goldman Environmental prize winners as well as 62 organizations and networks, which include 370 members in 85+ countries specifically called out the issue of offsets. Yet this was ignored. In fact, the TNFD did not even seek a meeting with signatories to better understand and incorporate their concerns. This is just one example of an egregious dismissal of civil society and environmental defender concerns.

TNFD is not aligned with Target 15 of the GBF

UNEP and the TNFD’s ongoing promotion of the TNFD framework as ‘aligned’ with Target 15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity is patently incorrect.

Target 15 of the GBF states:

Target 15: Businesses Assess, Disclose and Reduce Biodiversity-Related Risks and Negative Impacts

Take legal, administrative or policy measures to encourage and enable business, and in particular to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions:

”a) Regularly monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity, including with requirements for all large as well as transnational companies and financial institutions along their operations, supply and value chains, and portfolios;”

(b) Provide information needed to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns;

(c) Report on compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations and measures, as applicable;

in order to progressively reduce negative impacts on biodiversity, increase positive impacts, reduce biodiversity-related risks to business and financial institutions, and promote actions to ensure sustainable patterns of production.

The TNFD framework’s baseline does not recommend impact reporting. The TNFD doesn’t ‘transparently disclose’ – it cannot be fact-checked against realities on the ground. It also does not recommend forms of disclosure that allow local communities to identify which companies are sourcing from or financing activities in their area.

It also does not provide information needed to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns. For example, Rainforest Action Network provided extended analysis to the TNFD about existing banking transparency practices, initiatives, case studies and options that would allow consumers to know if their bank was financing companies linked to problematic practices. This also pointed to the extreme interest of consumers of banking products in transparency. This was submitted to the TNFD in [March 2024](#) and [February 2023](#) on its draft financial sector guidance and this analysis appears to have been wholly ignored.

Lastly, the recommendations of the TNFD have not been shown to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity. As noted elsewhere, the TNFD taskforce members themselves face persistent and ongoing environmental and human rights concerns. A systematic analysis of existing corporate initiatives – including those that have unilaterally failed, such as the Soft Commodities Compact, and others that have evolved and changed over time – would have highlighted that supply chain and financing transparency, as well as accountability mechanisms and grievance list reporting – have been more likely to lead to better outcomes as determined by environmental defenders and biodiversity outcomes, than high-level company self-reporting. Noting also that the CBD Alliance, a key civil society group advocating on the Global Biodiversity Framework, had also advocated extensively for liability and redress within Target 15.

The TNFD encourages new laws written by corporations

On numerous occasions, civil society members have called for TNFD and its co-founders to clearly state that as an initiative written by corporations, for corporations, it is an inappropriate basis for future laws and regulation. Yet UNEP has failed to do this and has continued to promote TNFD as a basis of national or international frameworks. Even the [FTI](#) has pointed out

the flaws in this approach. (It also critiqued the lack of black and geographic representation on the TNFD taskforce). In September 2023, the FT noted: *[“While it is a valuable, carefully considered contribution to this space, this week’s publication by the TNFD should be seen for what it is: a document produced by a group of corporate and financial executives, which must inevitably reflect their interests and priorities. It cannot be a legitimate foundation for a massively important new area of regulation, which will have implications for every person and species on the planet.”](#)*

In February 2023, RAN noted in a [submission](#) (p.31-32) a non-exhaustive list of examples of statements by TNFD, supporters and UNEP promoting TNFD as a basis of regulations. Examples would be more prolific now. It is extremely disturbing for a UN agency to be legitimizing corporate-led law and regulation making.

The TNFD lets many of the world’s largest agribusiness traders off the hook

By limiting its metrics and strategy pillar to a financial materiality baseline, the TNFD excludes many of the world’s largest agribusiness traders. In their submission to the TNFD on its then draft agribusiness guidance, Rainforest Action Network posed a question of what the ‘minimum’ threshold for reporting would be recommended. As the TNFD itself provided no examples of ‘minimum’ thresholds or clear definition of terms, RAN noted that this is likely to default to auditing terms, where anything that is less than a 3% change in value is not considered ‘material’, anything up to 10% ‘may’ be considered material or not, and 10% was clearly ‘in scope’ as materiality. This would suggest that the clear minimum threshold for the TNFD reporting would be a 10% change in value or equivalent. Reporting on potential risks arising in a potential 10% change in value are already likely to be a financial reporting requirement in many jurisdictions.

The full methodology and relevance of RAN’s finding is outlined in its March 2024 [submission](#). RAN chose to apply the methodology to agribusiness traders - as they are the price setters for agribusiness, one of the industries linked to the highest levels of terrestrial biodiversity loss, for example through land clearing for palm oil or beef. Traders have also structured their business in ways that minimize their own exposure to biodiversity risk - their business is highly diversified and their power in markets means that they can make money if supply is high or low (explored further in the submission). Using proxy data from the Forest and Finance database, RAN determined that most of the most powerful companies in setting the market for one of the most destructive industries to biodiversity would not reasonably meet this threshold for materiality. They could choose to report more should they decide but there is no ‘minimum’ requirement (see table 4 in Additional evidence and information p.24). Again, the TNFD did not have any further engagement or clarification with RAN and this issue remains in the now finalized guidance. This example, yet again, show how little care there was in terms of the usefulness and accuracy of what the TNFD framework would actually recommend.

2 - Environmental or human rights concerns raised against the TNFD taskforce company group members

Table 3: Sample of serious environmental or human rights concerns raised against TNFD taskforce company group members

This table suggests the scale and breadth of serious human rights and environmental concerns raised against company groups chosen for the taskforce as raised by communities, civil society groups or investors. This list of 18 company groups equates to 45% of the taskforce.

<u>Company group</u>	<u>Investor Exclusion List*</u>	<u>Listing in the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre database</u>	<u>OECD case (2020-2024)</u>	<u>Legal case (2019-2024)</u> (non-exhaustive)	<u>Other</u>
<u>Anglo American</u>	21	12 allegations 37 response requests 24 HRD attacks	GLAN vs. Anglo American PLC (2021)		
<u>AXA</u>	1	6 response requests		Sherpa criminal complaint filed against BNP Paribas, Credit Agricole, BPCE and AXA (2023)	
<u>Bank of America</u>		18 response requests			Consistently the 4th or 3rd largest banker of fossil fuels in Banking on Climate Chaos reports
<u>Bayer</u>	15	21 response requests	ECCH et al. vs Bayer AG (2024)		Over \$1.5 billion in penalties since 2019 for US environmental violations.
<u>BlackRock</u>	=	2 allegations 15 response requests			In 2022, UN Women ended its partnership with BlackRock after 700+ feminist organizations protested.
<u>BNP Paribas</u>	2	17 response requests 1 HRD attack		3 legal cases See: 1 , 2 , 3	

<u>Bunge</u>	1	17 response requests			
<u>Dow Inc</u>	1	7 response requests			Over \$100 million in penalties since 2019 for US environmental violations
<u>Ecopetrol</u>		28 response requests 20 HRD attacks			
<u>Holcim</u>	2	5 response requests	Twerwaneho Listeners' Club & Clouds Fm vs. Holcim AG (2023)		
<u>HSBC</u>	1	1 allegation 23 response requests 2 HRD attacks	BankTrack et al., vs. Swiss National Bank, UBS Group, Barclays, and HSBC (2024)		Penalized for greenwashing by the UK Advertising Standards Authority (2022)
<u>Macquarie bank</u>		1 response request 15 HRD attacks			
<u>Nestle</u>	<u>1</u>	41 response requests 2 HRD attacks 1 allegation			Ranks a 'D' on the Keep Forests Standing scorecard .
<u>Rabobank</u>		5 response requests			
<u>S&P</u>			Inclusive Development International et al. vs. S&P DJI Netherlands (2024)		
<u>Suzano</u>	1	6 response requests		Numerous	In 2020, Suzano assessed that it was possible it could face up to 324 civil & environmental proceedings
<u>Tata</u>	22	5 response requests		Multiple legal cases allege adverse	Tata Group has multiple mentions in the Land Conflict

				environmental and health impacts of Tata Steel's Dutch operations.	Watch database covering India.
UBS	1	10 response requests	BankTrack et al., vs. Swiss National Bank, UBS Group, Barclays, and HSBC (2024) Society for Threatened Peoples vs. UBS Group (2020)		
<p>Note: Most companies serving on TNFD do not have a grievance list - hampering the broader tracking of civil society complaints raised. The Business and Human Rights Resource Centre company dashboards provide additional information such as company responses and additional information, including CSO or media reports. Sources include: Business and Human Rights Resource Centre database; OECD Watch complaints database; Sabin Centre database of climate litigation; Violations Tracker database.</p> <p>**See Financial Exclusion List tracker, accessed 12 July. Reflects number of investors (not individual funds) that excluded company group or subsidiary of company group.</p>					

3 - Case Studies

Table 3 in this complaint is one of the most pressing examples of how the TNFD has amplified companies more likely linked to perpetrating biodiversity harms - and sidelined, if not outright ignored, the voices of environmental defenders, rights holders and others trying to defend biodiversity. Below are two further examples.

Vale

In 2019, the collapse of a Vale mining tailings dam created an unprecedented environmental disaster, killing hundreds of people in Brazil. This followed a similar dam collapse by a Vale subsidiary in [2015](#). The 2019 environmental disaster was so extreme as to justify [homicide charges](#) being filed against several Vale executives. In 2022, [concerns](#) about other Vale tailings dams persisted and Indigenous Peoples [continued to protest Vale](#) over its harms to nature and people, and operating without their Free, Prior and Informed Consent. Vale appeared on the exclusion lists of investors in 9 countries and in 2023 the SEC announced [legal action](#) against Vale alleging misleading disclosures. Vale then paid [\\$55.9 million](#) to settle the charges.

In December 2022, the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) [Nature Benchmark](#) ranked Vale the fifth best performing company on nature of 400 companies. While the WBA ranking is not a TNFD report, its [seven person expert review committee on nature](#) included staff from six organizations closely linked to TNFD, including the TNFD secretariat. The lack of outcry over

the Vale ranking is indicative of how far removed these ‘market-led’ discussions are from communities most impacted by the biodiversity crisis. In 2023 Vale again ranked highly at 12th.

Vale’s 2024 TNFD report is included on [TNFD’s website](#) - despite the 2023 SEC action raising questions about the credibility of Vale reporting. Vale is also active in the [Brazil TNFD working group](#) – the TNFD refuses to disclose members of national working groups but Vale has self-reported its involvement. It is hard to imagine that environmental defenders or those with the lived experience of environmental harms and loss of life connected with Vale would believe it to be a leader on nature. It also appears extremely unlikely that these voices have had any presence in the TNFD discussions, let alone been centered and valued for their expertise.

BlackRock, double materiality and the TNFD

In June 2024, we uncovered an [email](#) listed on BlackRock’s website to the TNFD working group co-chairs dated 19 March 2021.¹⁴ BlackRock noted that it was aligned with the overall goal of the TNFD *“to provide a framework for organizations to identify, assess, manage, and report on their impacts and dependencies on nature, aiding in the appraisal of nature-related risks and opportunities and there by redirecting global financial flows away from nature-negative outcomes and towards nature-positive outcomes.”*

This formulation of the ‘goal’ of the TNFD at this stage clearly signals the importance of acting on impacts - far different from the final language which set a far lower baseline on ‘materiality’. The two addressees of the email were both involved in the multistakeholder UK Global Resources Initiative (GRI) taskforce that had appraised the impacts of TNFD on deforestation outcomes - noting that reporting alone would not shift finance out of deforestation and that financial-risk approaches were particularly flawed. Additionally, academics at UCL had already pointed out at this time why a double materiality approach was the necessary baseline for a reporting initiative.¹⁵

BlackRock’s position clearly outlined its opposition to double materiality. Despite this BlackRock was then appointed to sit on the TNFD taskforce. It’s not clear who appointed BlackRock but certainly, the various civil society organizations that were campaigning on BlackRock’s environmental and social outcomes were not consulted on this decision. Notably, in 2022 another UN agency, UN Women [ended a proposed partnership](#) with BlackRock after unprecedented outcry by hundreds of feminist organizations.

The TNFD’s secretive processes mean that there is no public record to examine on decision-making. However, this email appears to suggest a clear example of how the structure of the TNFD taskforce - set up by its co-founders including UNEP - and overseen by its stewardship

¹⁴ Document downloaded and archived on 7 October 2024 here: <https://forestsandfinance.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/our-response-to-the-technical-scope-of-the-taskforce-on-nature-related-financial-disclosures-consultation.pdf>

¹⁵ https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/public-purpose/sites/public-purpose/files/final_kedward_et_al_nature-related_finance_18_aug.pdf

council - including UNEP - allowed corporations to water down the initiatives approach before it even began.

Extinction risk overlooked

Extinction risk is the most profound and irreversible impact on biodiversity, yet extinction risk has received very little attention in the TNFD's processes. It's unclear how the TNFD is expected to contribute to 2030 goals to halt and reverse biodiversity loss while it lacks even the most fundamental of requirements – that businesses identify, and refrain from, activities that could result in, or contribute to, the eradication of unique species or the threat of extinction. It's similarly unclear why UNEP has backed this position.

Worse still, the TNFD fails to even recommend species extinction risk reporting as a foundational requirement of the TNFD reports. On p.87 of its [September 2023 framework](#) document, the TNFD specifically outlines that reporting against so-called 'core' global metrics – which includes species extinction risk - is not required if “it has not been identified as relevant and material to the organisation, e.g. not relevant to business activities or the location the organisation is operating in, *or not found to be a material issue for the organisation*” [emphasis added]. Under this approach, a company adopting TNFD's baseline of single materiality can simply choose not to disclose a species extinction risk under the rationale that it is not 'financially material' to the company. Similarly, there is an additional loophole that a company can choose not to report against core global metrics even if it views the issue as financially material if this is 'commercially sensitive' – a term not defined in TNFD's 80+ page [glossary document](#) – so entirely open to interpretation.

Promoting fossil fuel financiers

The TNFD, and at times UNEP directly, also helped to promote the TNFD taskforce members as thought leaders on nature. This also undermines the efforts of environmental defenders and civil society organizations to press corporations to end harmful practices. For example, Bank of America spoke on several webinars as well as at events in Montreal in 2022. Bank of America is frequently listed by the Banking on Climate Chaos reports in the top 4 or 3 bankers of fossil fuels since 2016. The bank does not disclose this in its own TCFD reports on climate.¹⁶ Anglo American has also been an invited speaker. This is despite Anglo American facing several serious environmental and human rights concerns (see Table 3) and multiple coal mine fires since 2020.¹⁷

4 - Materiality thresholds - Agribusiness

This table is from RAN's [March 2024 submission](#) to the TNFD on its draft agribusiness guidance. Further detail on the methodology behind this analysis is available in the original submission.

¹⁶ See p.36-37 in RAN March 2023 submission to the TNFD on its financial sector guidance: <https://forestsandfinance.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/RAN-submission-to-the-TNFD-on-financial-sector-guidance-2024.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-07-01/grosvenor-coal-mine-fire-explosion-fears/104042048>

Table 4: Portion of large agribusiness traders' business in high forest-risk commodities and if they would meet a 10% 'as material' threshold			
Company group	% of company operations linked to forest-risk commodities Palm oil, soy, beef	% of supply chain financially impacted before being seen 'as material'	Clearly in scope for 'as material' metrics reporting
ADM	Palm: 4.74% Soy: 4.74%	None. As sits below 10%.	No.
Bunge. <i>Sits on TNFD taskforce</i>	Palm: 3.84% Soy: 3.84%	None. As sits below 10%.	No.
Cargill	Palm: 3% Beef: 0.5% Soy: 3%	None. As sits below 10%.	No. As Cargill is private, enterprise value definition of what is material to 'end-users' also unclear.
COFCO	Pam: 10.95% Soy: 21.91%	30.5%.	Not feasible. Would require almost 1/3rd of all high-risk commodity business to be financially impacted.
Louise Dreyfus	Palm: 1.82% Soy: 1.82%	None. As sits blow 10%.	No.
JBS <i>The world's largest meatpacker.</i>	Beef: 16.3%	61.5%	Not feasible. Would require almost 2/3 of all high-risk commodity business to be financially impacted.
Olam <i>Previously sat on TNFD</i>	Palm: 3.92% Soy: 3.92%	None. As sits below 10%.	No.
Wilmar <i>Controls an estimated 40% of global palm oil trade.</i>	Palm: 18.67% Soy: 7.49%	38.5%	Not feasible. Would require almost 40% of all high-risk commodity business to be financially impacted.
Based on data available at: https://forestsandfinance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/FF-2022-Full-update-Segment-country-adjusters-for-upload-220919.xlsx			

5 - Impact statements

Below are impact statements provided by individual organizations that outline specifically, from their perspective, how they perceive the impacts of the TNFD appointments or other aspects of TNFD's work impacting their organization or its work.

BankTrack Impact Statement

For the past 20 years, BankTrack has been advocating for a fair and transparent financial system. We focus on private commercial banks involved in projects that negatively impact human rights, climate, or the environment, often working with affected communities to expose the real-world effects of private financing deals. Our "[Dodgy Deals](#)" database documents companies and projects linked to various cases of abuse, human rights violations, and environmental damage. Some of the early adopters of the TNFD such as [Suzano](#), [Drax Group](#), [Vale](#), [MUFG](#), and [Bunge](#) are referenced in our Dodgy Deal database for the alleged corporate misconduct, abuses, or conflicts with local communities. Please see the supplementary tables for reference why we decided to track these companies and financial institutions.

While BankTrack sees the merit of voluntary standards and initiatives and has actively participated in initiatives to strengthen environmental and social standards in the financial sector, including the Equator Principles (EPs), the Principles for Responsible Banking (PRBs), and the Net Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA), we find the TNFD framework to be ineffective and even detrimental to the task of holding bank financiers and companies to account for the impact of their business activities, for several reasons:

Inadequate Disclosure: Companies engaged in high-risk and impactful activities are not obligated to disclose or list complaints related to their biodiversity and human rights practices. BankTrack has been independently tracking these issues long before TNFD's existence and we will continue to do so. As it stands, TNFD reporting standards fail to ensure that the public is effectively informed and shifts the responsibility onto organizations like ours to invest time and resources into independently researching these impacts. As such, TNFD is a missed opportunity to strengthen public disclosure and accountability.

Lack of Transparency: Informing local communities whether a company or a bank is operating, sourcing, or financing activities in their area is crucial for any meaningful consultation or consent and the most basic right of such communities. However, the lack of transparency in this regard has been a significant barrier to fighting for justice by local communities that have been harmed. We often have to conduct independent investigations, using our own resources, to seek recourse from companies that have harmed the local environment. We're often forced to uncover this information on our own—a challenging and costly process—which ironically undermines the very purpose of a "disclosure framework." The absence of requirements for TNFD adopters to disclose even basic information to stakeholders conveniently allows them to avoid accountability for their potentially harmful actions

Inconsistency in Data: The diverse accounting and reporting methods allowed within the TNFD framework make it difficult to compare and verify data across companies. Our review of initial reports from early adopters like Bunge, Vale, and MUFG shows a lack of consistency amongst adopters about indicators, methods, and impacts that are perceived as material, which means that TNFD adherence fails to provide a comprehensive and credible picture of impacts on nature by these companies. Without this knowledge campaigning groups like ours need to reference other sources, which questions the purpose of TNFD's existence.

Overall, in our day-to-day efforts to hold finance institutions and companies to account for their impact on nature and communities, we view the TNFD as a missed opportunity to be a powerful tool for change. Rather than serving as a powerful tool for change and transparency, it stands in the way of empowering impacted communities in the face of corporate impacts on nature.

BankTrack Dodgy Deals: As a supplement to this impact statement, please find two tables on the following pages summarizing information provided in BankTrack's publicly available Dodgy Deal database.

Dodgy Deal Profile on the BankTrack website	Associated Nature impacts	association with TNFD
Drax Group	Drax is the second-largest wood biomass producer. Drax is the largest single CO2 emitter in the UK and burns the equivalent of 138% of the UK's total annual wood production. Additionally, Drax is sourcing its wood from old-growth forests in Canada, despite claiming that the wood used in its biomass pellets is derived from wholly sustainable sources.	early adopter
Suzano	Suzano is the world's largest eucalyptus pulp producer. Suzano's operations have led to significant deforestation and land and water degradation, adversely affecting local ecosystems and the rights and livelihoods of indigenous and local communities. Multiple cases of its corporate greenwashing narratives applied by Suzano have been exposed in this report .	early adopter and taskforce member
Vale	Vale's mining activities have caused substantial environmental damage, including deforestation and pollution, which negatively impact local ecosystems and threaten the rights and livelihoods of indigenous communities. The Brazilian federal government included Vale in the 'dirty list' of slave labor.	early adopter TNFD report does not disclose information about these impacts
Bunge	Bunge Limited is one of the world's largest industrial food companies, it controls much of the trade, processing, and sale of soy in the Cerrado – making Bunge a leading driver of deforestation in the region, both through its own plantations and through its control of the soy trade. Bunge has been linked to buying soybeans from companies allegedly supplied by a farmer fined for rainforest deforestation.	early adopter TNFD report does not disclose information about these impacts
RWE	RWE is Europe's biggest single emitter of CO2 converting its two coal power plants in the Netherlands to burning wood, which emits more carbon per unit of energy than coal and is devastating forest ecosystems. All of the pellets burned in Dutch coal power stations of RWE are imported, but RWE refuses to disclose where its pellets are sourced from but its suppliers Enviva , Graanul Invest , and Pinnacle Pellets routinely source whole logs from clearcut biodiverse, native or old-growth forests for their wood pellets.	early adopter

Olam Agri	Olam's is a global integrated supply chain manager, processor and trader of soft commodities like palm oil. In December 2016, Mighty Earth filed a complaint with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), detailing evidence that Olam had cleared large areas of rainforest for oil palm and rubber plantation development in Gabon.	early adopter
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Bank Name	Dodgy Deal Association	Associated Impacts of the financing	Association with the TNFD
Rabobank	JBS , Suzano	Rabobank provides finance to companies carrying out illegal deforestation, creating mass pesticide pollution, and causing ongoing violence towards Indigenous land stewards.	early adopter, taskforce member
Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group	CMPC , Suzano	Sumitomo Mitsui provides finance to companies that are profiting from illegal land grabbing and dangerous monoculture farming.	early adopter
UBS	CMPC , Enviva , UPM	UBS provides financial support to , companies that are harvesting native hardwood forests and performing illegal land grabs.	early adopter, taskforce member
Bank of America	CMPC , Suzano , UPM-Kymmene	BOA provides finance to companies that are logging high conservation value forests, while creating exorbitant water waste and mass plantations, inter alia.	early adopter, taskforce member
BTG Pactual	CMPC , Suzano	BTG provides finance to company productions that dangerously reduce local water quality and quantity, and which are also tied to the violence towards and displacement of Indigenous Peoples.	early adopter
Crédit Agricole S.A.	JBS , Suzano , UPM-Kymmene	Credit Agricole provides finance to companies that are tied to mass deforestation, water pollution, drought and forest fires, and Indigenous land grabbing, inter alia.	early adopter
KBC Group	Bunge , Sime Darby	KBC provides finance to agriculture companies that exploit their harvests	early adopter

		from ancestral lands and high conservation value, high carbon stock forests.	
Standard Chartered	Sime Darby , Bunge , Indofood , Cargill	Standard Chartered has provided financial support to large scale agriculture companies that carry out mass deforestation and encroach on Indigenous Peoples. Some of these companies like Cargill have a track record of illegal waste dumping and mass illegal deforestation of national forests and protected lands.	early adopter
Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Asset Management	Sinar Mas	Sumitomo trust was found to hold shares in Sinar Mas, a company which is responsible for extensive illegal deforestation, creating fire risk, opaque company structure, and greenwashing.	early adopter
UniteOverseas Bank	Indofood , Sinar Mas , Wilmar Group	UOB has given financial support to industries that carry out landgrabs and destroy sacred ancestral sites, while also performing deforestation, and destroying peatland.	early adopter
Commerzbank AG	UPM-Kymmene	CB has provided financial support to companies that log harvest high conservation value forests, cause local water shortages, and convert grassland into plantations.	early adopter
Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc.	CMPC , Suzano , Royal Golden Eagle Group	Mitsubishi has provided financial support for industries with traceable impacts on endangering tiger and elephant populations, as well as polluting water, endangering Indigenous rights, and more.	early adopter
Mizuho Financial Group, Inc.	Suzano	Mizuho's provides financial support for, Suzano, operations of which have led to deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and soil degradation, negatively impacting ecosystems and local communities.	early adopter
MUFG Asset Management	CMPC , Suzano , Royal Golden Eagle Group	MUFG has provided financial support for companies that practice forest clearance and peatland drainage, causing significant habitat destruction, and pollution.	adopter

Milieudefensie – Friends of the Earth Netherlands impact statement

Since the end of the previous century, Milieudefensie has been consistently informing Dutch financial institutions, including Rabobank, about the adverse impacts of industrial plantation and logging sectors. The Dutch financial sector is the [European champion](#) of deforestation finance and their investment funds are [not as sustainable as they claim](#). We have documented numerous [cases on clients from Rabobank](#), that are involved in deforestation, human rights violations and environmental impacts globally. And worked with the affected indigenous peoples to ensure justice and redress. We brought affected communities and human rights defenders to the Rabobank offices in the Netherlands, for example in relation to palm oil clients [in Liberia and Indonesia](#).

Responses from Rabobank have been highly insufficient. Rabobank uses inefficient engagement and has an over reliance on certification schemes for their due diligence of forest risk clients. Milieudefensie therefore filed one complaint related to their palm oil investments [with the OECD](#). And more importantly we shifted strategies twenty years ago to prioritize regulation of the financial sector in order to prohibit harmful finance and investments. We challenge false solutions like certification and advocate for measures that go beyond mandatory disclosure.

More recently the reactions from Rabobank to information on cases such as [Suzano](#) and [Bolloré-Socfin](#) have not been serious. Despite divestment action from other financial institutions and exclusion of harmful sectors and companies, Rabobank pursues their engagement without clear results for people and the environment. For example, Bolloré-Socfin are subject of exclusion recommendations from Norwegian and Swiss pension funds. Rabobank refers to client confidentiality to refrain from answering questions about their clients adverse impacts and their engagement results. And has even developed a highly controversial system of carbon credits that was [exposed by investigative journalists](#). Rabobank is [not willing to develop and implement climate action plans](#) in line with the Paris Agreement.

Overview [reports](#) and [databases](#) on financial institutions that bankroll the biodiversity crisis list Rabobank as one of the top financial institutions related to forest risk sectors.

Rabobank is one of the early adopters of the TNFD and sits on the TNFD taskforce. The bank puts TNFD center stage in [their global vision for nature](#), and says that TNFD will be a driver for change, and contribute to [reverse biodiversity and nature loss](#). Whereas scholars and civil society have criticized TNFD and disclosure in general for years for failing to contribute to real change in the financial sector. Rabobank has not been responsive and effective in dealing with our cases of human rights violations and biodiversity loss. And it has been structurally financing agri-business and monoculture plantations sectors that are the biggest drivers of biodiversity loss globally: In 2024 the Forest & Finance coalition found that Rabobank is still ranking in the top ten of tropical deforestation financiers (data from 2018 – 2024 June), specifically because of their agri-business investments in South America. Rabobank promotes TNFD as a solution for

the biodiversity crisis, while perpetuating their damaging practices. A classic example of greenwash, that blocks and delays real action and thereby undermines efforts from our organisations and affected indigenous peoples and local communities to achieve justice and redress.

6 - Timeline and Resources

Since September 2022, the Forests & Finance coalition has maintained a list of critical perspectives on TNFD as well as additional relevant context on its webpage. This [link](#) was frequently included in public statements. This shows that should it have chosen, UNEP could have easily identified the groups, statements and contacts of those raising concerns.

A full copy of resources on the current Forests & Finance page follows - starting with the most recent - as this provides important context. Key statements, like the May 2023 open letter to the TNFD, are highlighted in yellow.

October 2024: 14 NGOs and networks, led by Friends of the Earth International, write [a letter](#) to the Executive Secretary of the CBD about concerns about the 'mainstreaming' process. It calls out concerns about a host of false solutions – including the TNFD. Also in [Spanish](#).

October 2024: The [Banking on Biodiversity Collapse report](#) includes [a case study](#) examining agribusiness trader Bunge's TNFD report comparing it with existing information and controversies of its biodiversity and human rights impacts in the Cerrado. The BoBC [report](#) also found that 9 of the top 30 forest-risk banks were TNFD members. Further examples of company TNFD reports can be found on the TNFD website [here](#).

October 2024: The Forests & Finance coalition release the [Regulating Finance for Biodiversity report](#). This examines a host of regulations in five jurisdictions. It highlights weakness and strengths in current laws, and show that much more must be done to realise the Global Biodiversity Framework Target 14 to shift financial flows.

September 2024: Rainforest Action Network [presentation about TNFD](#) to the CBD Alliance webinar 'Finance, biodiversity and justice'.

June 2024: The TNFD announces a new Co-Chair to replace Elizabeth Maruma Mrema who stepped down in March. In a [press release](#) the new Co-Chair, Razan Al Mubarak, president of the IUCN explicitly expresses their intention to embed the corporate-led TNFD framework in public policy. Noting: "I look forward to helping lead the Taskforce's efforts as we seek to embed the TNFD recommendations in the global corporate reporting architecture aligned with the commitment of over 190 governments around the world to Target 15 of the Global Biodiversity Framework."

May 2024: Bryan Bixcul - Maya Tz'utujil person and staff member of Indigenous rights organization Cultural Survival - published an article on [Indigenous peoples, biodiversity and the](#)

[responsibilities of financial institutions](#). Of the TNFD, the author writes “the TNFD doesn’t do enough to protect Indigenous rights and biodiversity. It allows for self-reporting, so companies and financial institutions get to choose what they want to report, and it doesn’t allow for a grievance mechanism, so communities don’t have a way of starting a complaint when violations have occurred” also adding “The TNFD is nothing more than the private sector’s efforts to institutionalize their avoidance of human rights and biodiversity responsibilities”.

May 2024: Forests & Finance coalition release the briefer [Regulating Finance: A precondition to regulating the Global Biodiversity Framework](#). This lists the TNFD as a ‘false solution’ that distracts from meaningful implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Also available in [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Portuguese](#) and [Indonesian](#).

March 2024: Rainforest Action Network submits feedback to the TNFD on two of its draft guidances issued in December. The TNFD does not have a mechanism for public disclosure of feedback. RAN’s feedback can be seen here on [Food and agriculture](#) and on [Finance](#).

March 2024: RAN [presentation](#) on the TNFD for staff at Third World Network.

January 2024: Global Witness is quoted by [Reuters](#) in an article about the TNFD. This raises several concerns including that “TNFD will increase data availability, but it won’t change the incentives for making a quick buck from funding companies that treat nature like a disposable resource”.

January 2024: At Davos, the TNFD announces [a list of 320 ‘early adopter’ companies](#) that will start TNFD reporting in 2024 and 2025. Several CSOs issue a [joint media release](#) in response.

January 2024: [A committee of UK MPs investigating how to stop finance flowing to companies deforesting abroad](#) reject the TNFD’s theory of change, concluding more data reporting would be insufficient without a national due diligence law to ensure financial actors cut off deforestation clients in practice.

January 2024: French publication [Novethic article](#) on the TNFD references CSO critique of TNFD including its failure to require reporting on complaints about biodiversity or human rights, that it doesn’t sufficiently take into account the rights of communities where companies operate nor require reporting based on double materiality.

December 2023: The TNFD releases a series of new or updated draft sector guidances that focus primarily on company self-assessment, but include some recommendations on disclosure. Feedback is due by 29 March 2024 and will not be made public. Draft guidances are: [Aquaculture](#), [Biotechnology and pharmaceuticals](#), [Chemicals](#), [Electric utilities and power generation](#), [Finance](#), [Food and agriculture](#), [Forestry and paper](#), [Metals and Mining](#) and [Oil and gas](#).

November 2023: The article, [‘Moving beyond a tokenistic participation of Indigenous Peoples in nature financing’](#), written by an anonymous Indigenous author, critiques the TNFD – and various other initiatives – approach to Indigenous Peoples’ rights. On the TNFD, the article emphasizes

that it fails to respect the forms of disclosure emphasized by Indigenous Peoples or to protect and respect their rights. Also adding: "To answer whether the framework would be effective for uncovering environmental damage on Indigenous territories, one simply needs to ask: *What would self-disclosure look like for a company whose business model is reliant on displacing Indigenous Peoples from their territories and destroying their territories, either directly or through their value chains?* Most likely, the company would use their TNFD report to greenwash, by claiming that they "engaged" some group of Indigenous people, without providing the transparency required."

November 2023: Green Central Banking publish an article '[The TNFD is written by corporations, not biodiversity leaders...and it shows](#)' authored by Rainforest Action Network.

October 2023: RAN [presentation](#) on the final TNFD framework at a [side event](#) to the UN Principles on Responsible Investment in Person conference. This includes highlighting that the TNFD framework does not align with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

September 2023: RAN makes a [submission to the UK Environmental Audit Committee](#) in response to its call for views on the TNFD. The submission provides an overview of concerns related to the TNFD's processes, structure and final framework recommendations.

September 2023: The Canary article [The corporations making up the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosure hold a prolific record of ecological and human rights violations](#) writes that company groups on the TNFD taskforce have faced close to 300 allegations of rights violations in just 10 years.

September 2023: The [FT](#) critiques the lack of black representation and geographic representation on the TNFD taskforce and notes: "While it is a valuable, carefully considered contribution to this space, this week's publication by the TNFD should be seen for what it is: a document produced by a group of corporate and financial executives, which must inevitably reflect their interests and priorities. *It cannot be a legitimate foundation for a massively important new area of regulation, which will have implications for every person and species on the planet.*" [Green Central Banking](#), [Bloomberg](#) and [Eco-Business](#) reporting also reference CSO concerns.

September 2023: CSOs issue a joint press release on the launch of the TNFD: '[Final framework launches to ongoing fears of greenwashing](#)'.

September 2023: The TNFD's [final framework](#) is launched at an invite-only event in New York, with [additional documents](#).

September 2023: Rainforest Action Network releases a [pre-emptive press release](#) ahead of the TNFD framework launch, based on the TNFD's failure to act on key greenwashing concerns throughout its process.

August 2023: An [Eco-Business article](#) about the TNFD notes that it has been welcomed by market participants but that "NGOs are skeptical of whether it will address the role of large companies in driving biodiversity loss" and cites the [May 2023 CSO Open Letter](#).

June 2023: An article by Rainforest Action Network is published on the BankTrack website: [‘Two months ago 62 organizations and 3 Goldman Environmental Prize winners wrote an Open Letter to the TNFD: No one responded’](#).

July 2023: An [open access article](#) in the academic journal [Conservation Letters](#) “[Risky Business](#)” raises many concerns about the TNFD, including that it is a form of corporate capture of public decision-making. It is also available in an [unofficial Chinese translation](#).

June 2023: A [letter published in the journal Nature](#), led by a Professor of Accounting and Risk, cites the recent CSO open letter and raises concerns about the lack of scientists in the TNFD’s governance structures, and the risks of corporate capture including a “greenwashing risk” of regulatory processes. [Environmental Finance](#) reports on the Nature article under the heading [‘TNFD criticised for lack of scientists in governance’](#).

June 2023: Media outlet [Environmental Finance](#) puts key concerns raised in the 2023 CSO open letter to the TNFD – including that the TNFD has failed to propose disclosures on links to rights violations, lobbying around nature or nature-related complaints against companies, and that it has not included the voices of youth or a gender analysis of its work. In response, the TNFD discusses its stakeholder engagement but does not respond to the substantive points raised.

June 2023: A new [briefing paper](#) calls on financial institutions to commit to five key principles to align their activities with the Global Biodiversity Framework. It is written by the Bank Information Centre, BankTrack, Friends of the Earth US and Rainforest Action Network.

June 2023: Forest Peoples Programme publishes a blog [‘TNFD must integrate the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in its framework’](#) highlighting concerns with the TNFD’s current approach and why it is critical that it adopts necessary human rights provisions.

June 2023: A submission to the TNFD from the [School of Biological and Behavioural Sciences](#), Queen Mary University of London notes that “there is a risk that insufficient attention to the extinction crisis undermines the credibility of the TNFD Framework”. [Carbon Pulse](#) report on the submission.

June 2023: The [International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity](#) makes a submission to the TNFD. It makes a host of recommendations, particularly raising that the TNFD does not align with Indigenous Peoples’ rights under international human rights law or the more rights-centered framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. NGOs [Forest Peoples Programme](#), [BankTrack](#) and [Global Witness](#) also make submissions. As of September 2023 public comment letters no longer seem to appear on the TNFD website. The Forests & Finance coalition has an archive of all public comment letters which can be accessed [here](#). Almost two-thirds of comment letters on v.4 were not public.

May 2023: 62 civil society organizations and networks – whose members include over 370 groups across 85+ countries on six continents – as well as three winners of the Goldman Environmental Prize write an [open letter](#) to the TNFD highlighting that its final draft fails to

address some of its worst flaws that will facilitate greenwashing. The letter is in multiple languages. See also a press release [here](#). [Capital Monitor](#) report on the letter.

March 2023: Before the release of the TNFD's final draft, Rainforest Action Network publishes a blog on [Key questions to ask of TNFD's final draft](#). This includes highlighting a real-world example of the types of concerns that poor nature-related reporting can lead to.

March 2023: Throughout early 2023, cross-party UK parliamentarians, NGOs and even a TNFD co-founder raise concerns that instead of the government regulating the UK financing behind deforestation – as [advised by its own taskforce](#) – TNFD is [promoted as a solution](#) (i.e. statements by [Lady Boycott](#) and [Global Canopy](#)). In January, the former Chair of Barclays UK and the UK government-appointed Global Resources Initiative taskforce publicly [wrote](#) that “[The GRI] analysis concluded this to be necessary because risk reporting mechanisms such as the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) and voluntary net zero pledges are insufficient to prevent deforestation financing.”

March 2023: Global Witness briefing [TNFD will not stop UK banks from financing deforestation, contrary to the government's argument](#).

March 2023: The TNFD launches the fourth draft of its framework.

February 2023: RAN provides a detailed [submission to TNFD on draft 3](#) of its proposed framework. This repeats various concerns raised by rightsholder and civil society groups since version 1 and presents evidence of the TNFD's adverse impacts on public policy.

December 2022: [Impact Investor](#) reports on civil society concerns about the TNFD. Mongabay's [comprehensive rundown](#) of COP 15 notes concerns about the environmental and social record of several TNFD taskforce members.

December 2022: The Global Forest Coalition, Friends of the Earth International, the CBD Alliance, EcoNexus and the Forests and Finance coalition raise concerns about the TNFD throughout COP 15 in Montreal. This includes at press conferences on [7 December](#), [15 December](#), [16 December](#) and [19 December](#), at panels and video screenings on 8 December and [13 December](#), in the EcoNexus publication provided to delegates on [15](#) and [17 December](#), in a high-level meeting with the CBD Executive Secretary, in [press releases](#) and [briefings](#) and in questions raised to the TNFD representatives at events. This includes concern that a corporate push for TNFD-style business reporting at COP 15 usurped long-standing community calls focused on legal accountability for business impacts on nature and people.

December 2022: Friends of the Earth International [Nature of Business](#) report raises concerns about corporate capture of global biodiversity discussions, including the role of the TNFD.

December 2022: The Global Forest Coalition and Forests and Finance coalition release a 4-minute [video about TNFD](#) in English, [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Bahasa Indonesian](#) and [Portuguese](#). This video is included in the [Women's Earth and Climate Action Network briefing on COP 15](#).

December 2022: Trilogue discussions in the EU agree on a new law to combat deforestation in imported forest-risk commodities, and commit to developing a [regulatory proposal](#) on financial institutions' links to deforestation.

November 2022: The civil society CBD Alliance releases an update of its paper '[The ingredients for a successful Global Biodiversity Framework](#)', which includes critique of the TNFD.

November 2022: Civil society groups' [press release on TNFD's draft 3](#): 'TNFD's reputation as the next frontier for corporate greenwashing on nature remains firmly intact'. Rainforest Action Network collates its [first impressions on TNFD's draft](#).

November 2022: The TNFD releases its Beta v.03 [framework](#) as well as a series of other papers accessible [here](#).

November 2022: Rainforest Action Network [presentation](#) to the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity on the TNFD.

October 2022: Rainforest Action Network [presentation](#) to Global Canopy discussing proof of concept examples of how the TNFD could incorporate human rights reporting.

October 2022: [Bloomberg](#) covers the October CSO open letter (see below) and taskforce member BNP Paribas goes on the record for being 'all for' double materiality in the TNFD.

October 2022: 48 organizations and networks – whose members include over 220 organizations on 6 continents – write an [open letter to TNFD](#) with “profound concerns” about its work.

September 2022: Four organizations and networks write to TNFD outlining [detailed concerns](#). They outline that the TNFD risks instituting greenwashing and call for an evidence-led approach

September 2022: The UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights releases its [report into Corporate influence and the regulatory sphere](#). The report stresses the need for transparency, reporting on corporate lobbying and ensuring that a diverse array of stakeholders – including civil society organizations and Indigenous Peoples organizations are at the heart of decision-making, including on environmental policy. It also stresses the importance of remedy.

September 2022: The EU Parliament votes [in favor of legal measures](#) to ensure that products sold in the EU do not come from deforested or degraded land, which also includes human rights provisions. This includes a vote in favor of requirements to cover financial institutions. The final law is now being negotiated through the European tripartite process.

September 2022: A new blog on the BankTrack website: [Planning for public disclosures through hidden closed-door processes?: Why the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures needs to overhaul its approach to transparency](#)

September 2022: RAN publishes a [press briefer](#) on the TNFD.

September 2022: This Forests & Finance coalition webpage on the TNFD is launched.

August 2022: RAN publishes a technical blog: [New evidence reiterates that TNFD doesn't have a mandate for its 'enterprise value' only approach](#)

August 2022: Global Forest Coalition publishes a blog outlining concerns: [You've probably never heard about TNFD, but it threatens to be the new frontier in corporate greenwashing](#)

August 2022: Thirteen civil society organizations issue a [joint press release](#) stating that the UN-backed TNFD risks being the “new frontier for corporate greenwashing on nature”^[x]. It outlines deep concerns with the TNFD’s June 2022 draft (Beta v0.2), which fails to incorporate recommendations raised by 28 NGOs and networks in [May 2022](#).

July 2022: The Co-Chair of the TNFD states that in future the TNFD should be [made mandatory](#).

July 2022: A new report by the [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services \(IPBES\)](#) – the leading global research body on biodiversity – stresses the role of justice in outcomes for nature and people. It also highlights the importance of diversity and accountability in decision-making.

June 2022: The UK government publishes its Global Resource Initiative taskforce [Finance Report](#). The multi-stakeholder taskforce was first set up in July 2019. The taskforce and supporting working groups involved individuals from finance, corporations and NGOs – including groups who set up TNFD. The report strongly recommends that the UK government pass legislation to stop UK financing linked to deforestation. It outlines why voluntary initiatives and reporting-only approaches alone are insufficient to halt the financing behind deforestation.

June 2022: The TNFD publishes the [second draft of its framework](#) (Beta v0.2). It also publishes a [TNFD data discussion paper](#) and a [TNFD piloting guide](#) for businesses that are piloting its framework.

June 2022: [Piloting](#) the TNFD framework with business begins. The TNFD has five separate pilot programs, each involving multiple companies testing and providing feedback on its proposal.

June 2022: Rainforest Action Network publishes an Op Ed in [Euroactiv](#) raising concerns with the TNFD.

May 2022: The international Network for Greening of the Financial System of central banks and supervisors announces its 2022-2024 workplan. This will include prioritizing a [task force on nature-related risks](#) chaired by staff at Banque de France and De Nederlandsche Bank.

Analysis of national economies' exposure to, or impacts on, nature have also been undertaken by central banks in [France](#), [the Netherlands](#) and [Malaysia](#).

May 2022: Rainforest Action Network writes a [submission](#) to the UN Business and Human Rights working group looking at [Corporate Influence in the Political and Regulatory Sphere](#). This presented the TNFD as a case study of systemic issues regarding the undue influence of the private sector in financial sector initiatives endorsed by governments and/or in political and regulatory discussions.

May 2022: A [Joint NGO Open Letter to TNFD](#) signed by 28 NGOs and organizations raises key concerns and recommendations on the March 2022 draft. This included concerns regarding exclusion of rights holders and Global South CSOs from the TNFD's consultation process, the exclusion of human rights, the need for the TNFD to explicitly require business to report on actual and potential adverse risks and impacts to nature and people, and concerns that it is setting a lower standard than existing corporate initiatives in high-risk industries. Rainforest Action Network also provides a 98-page technical submission.

May 2022: The TNFD [announces](#) a partnership with IUCN to engage Indigenous Peoples and local communities. *Unlike the numerous formal programs to engage business, this appears to be the sole formal process targeting rights holder and civil society engagement.*

May 2022: The [Task Force on Inequality-related Disclosures](#) (TIFD) launches information materials aimed at both experts and lay people. It's [FAQ](#) explains its aims and relevance to different stakeholders, including CSOs, its [twitter feed](#) helps to explain key concepts and it is seeking help to create a genuine [co-design process](#). By contrast, the TNFD's materials are almost impossible for non-financial experts to understand.

April 2022: The need for the TNFD to focus more on outcomes for nature, not just business 'dependencies', is also [raised by Cardano and its investor subsidiary Actiam](#).

March 2022: A Third World Network [briefing paper](#) on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) talks also references concerns (p.4) that the TNFD could make finance more expensive for certain countries (later [elaborated further](#)).

March 2022: A Network for Greening of the Financial System and INSPIRE study group [final report](#) is released. This references what it calls the 'endogeneity of risk' – that businesses who contribute to environmental harms, may not be the most impacted from those harms. Therefore it is important to ensure analysis and research into nature and biodiversity-related risks and the financial system considers impacts not just financial materiality.

March 2022: The TNFD launches the [first draft](#) of its framework, Beta v0.1. It will be further refined through three more drafts before being finalized in September 2023.

November 2021: A Joint NGO statement on [voluntary initiatives on deforestation for or by financial institutions](#) outlined 7 basic questions to help distinguish false solutions from real change. (Also [Bahasa Indonesia](#) and [Portuguese](#)).

October 2021: The [Kunming Declaration](#) includes commitments to “to respect, protect and promote human rights obligations when taking actions to protect biodiversity”. This comes as part of ongoing talks on a Post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Note: Expectations on human rights in business and/or environmental efforts are also referenced in other international commitments such as the [Glasgow Leaders Declaration on Forests and Land Use](#), the [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises](#) and the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#).

October 2021: The Global Reporting Initiative publishes its revised [Universal Standard](#) that will take effect on 1 January 2023. The GRI first began in 2000, and now is a voluntary set of standards that most of the world’s largest businesses already report against. The GRI requires all businesses’ reporting under GRI (including on biodiversity) to include human rights reporting.

June 2021: The Informal Working Group to the TNFD publishes its [Nature in Scope](#) report which includes a summary of the proposed scope, governance, work plan, communication and resourcing plan of TNFD. Notably its list of who beneficiaries from the TNFD’s work does not include those who most depend on nature or face the greatest risk of defending it.

May 2021: The Global Environmental Facility approves [USD\\$1.7 million](#) in 42-month funding to WWF-US to [set up](#) the TNFD. Notably the [Stakeholder Engagement Plan](#) has little inclusion of NGOs and CSOs. In its risk assessment and mitigation it omits mention of important risks. This includes the risk of writing the TNFD framework *before* a landmark new international global biodiversity framework is agreed (i.e. linked to the Convention on Biological Diversity, this aims to be the biodiversity equivalent to the Paris Agreement on climate); that the TNFD may undermine existing corporate norms and expectations; or co-optation risks of a business-controlled decision making process. The documents also state that concerns regarding the TNFD can be made via a WWF grievance mechanism but no mention has been made privately or publicly by the TNFD to this mechanism. The [gender action plan](#) covers staffing and appointments, but has no plan for engaging women land defenders or organizations working on gender and nature issues.

Co-financing mentioned in project documents include a \$400,000 grant by UNDP, as well as \$100,000 in-kind. In early 2020, the European Forest Institute had also awarded a [EUR 250,000](#) 24-month [tender](#) to Global Canopy to work on the TNFD. Other funders have also contributed to the TNFD. They are listed [here](#). It is not clear if this funding is contingent on any requirements of fair and equal inclusion of diverse stakeholders.

February 2021: [The Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity](#) is published. It identifies the key role that the financial system plays in driving the biodiversity crisis.

January 2021: A Global Witness blog, [Why climate risk reporting will not stop the finance industry bankrolling deforestation](#), outlines key reasons why climate-risk reporting (particularly under the TCFD, finalized in 2017) has failed on deforestation. It notes that the proposed the TNFD approach is replicating these mistakes.

December 2020: BankTrack issues a [report](#) examining key lessons learned of why the Banking Environment Initiative Soft Commodities Compact failed to meet ‘zero net deforestation’ over its six-year lifespan. This was one of the first joint finance and nature initiatives and several of the non-business groups involved in setting up the Compact are now involved in the TNFD.

August 2020: UCL academics publish a paper on [Managing nature-related financial risks: a precautionary policy approach for central banks and financial supervisors](#). The paper outlines why nature-related risks cannot be sufficiently managed by information disclosure and quantitative risk estimates.

July 2020: Efforts to bring together a Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures is announced. The [Informal Working Group](#) that will set up the TNFD does not include rights holders or Global South civil society organizations beyond a narrow band of environmental data experts from NGOs and UN agencies. It also involves senior staff from several companies who face serious concerns related to their own environmental and human rights outcomes. It does not develop a due process protocol (unlike [EFRAG](#) or [GSSB](#)) or co-design process (see [TIFD](#)).[viii]

January 2020: The world’s first Covid-19 lockdown begins in Wuhan, China. The global pandemic contributes to raising the alarm about the links between [nature loss and the spread of zoonotic diseases](#). Some scientists estimate the [economic costs](#) of inaction to be 100 times greater than the costs of prevention.