

A photograph of a wooden boardwalk winding through a dense forest. The path is flanked by lush green ferns and other foliage. The lighting is soft, suggesting a shaded forest environment. The path leads into the distance, disappearing into the trees.

*act*4nature
Portugal

Execution Report

2020 - 2022

december 2023

 **BCSD**
PORTUGAL

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I. Summary

The act4nature Portugal initiative is a call to action for Portuguese companies to commit to reversing biodiversity loss by integrating nature into their strategies and business models. By joining, companies subscribe to 10 Common Commitments that must be implemented through a set of individual commitments. Every two years of the initiative's implementation by companies, the performance in the undertaken commitments should be reported.

The first year of the initiative, 2020, saw the participation of 15 companies of varied sizes and sectors. Throughout 2023, these companies reported the performance on their individual commitments in the first execution cycle (2020-2022), in alignment with the report developed in the context of act4nature international. Thus, this report synthesizes, in an aggregated manner, the main characteristics of the individual commitments assumed in 2020, their execution status for the period 2020-2022, as well as how they were reported and communicated.

In 2020, a total of 165 commitments were assumed, representing an average of 11 commitments per company. Most of these commitments extends beyond the execution cycle (2020-2022), although 40% of them were expected to be completed within the cycle. Their addressed topics are diverse, however, there is a larger fraction focused on mobilizing resources and partnerships to support companies' actions on the ground, associated with Common Commitment 9. On the other hand, the least addressed themes were the development of Nature-Based Solutions (Common Commitment 6) and dialogue on biodiversity with policymakers (Common Commitment 7).

For the analyzed execution cycle (2020-2022), it was observed that most commitments assumed by companies (66%) were fulfilled, either by being completed or in progress with the intermediate/annual target achieved. Additionally, 21% of commitments are in progress towards temporal goals extending beyond 2022, and only a small fraction (13%) has not been initiated/executed. It was also noted that most commitments were reported publicly (85%) and communicated/disclosed externally (62%).

Overall, the results of the 2020-2022 execution cycle indicate positive progress toward the fulfillment of commitments proposed by the companies and established goals, especially considering the unforeseen challenges posed by the pandemic during that period. Some opportunities for improvement were identified in the companies' commitments and their respective execution, most of which were

considered in the renewal/update of commitments that these companies made for the next execution cycle of act4nature Portugal.

In terms of the elaboration of the execution reports of act4nature Portugal, this initial report has already identified some improvement opportunities, particularly in terms of the information collected about the execution of corporate commitments, to complement and enrich the analyses conducted.

2. The act4nature Portugal initiative

With the aim of mobilizing companies to protect and promote biodiversity, the [act4nature international](#) initiative emerged in 2018 in France, led by Entreprises pour l'Environnement (a member of the WBCSD Global Network). As part of this initiative, the Business Council for Sustainable Development (BCSD) Portugal launched [act4nature Portugal](#) on May 22, 2020 – International Day for Biological Diversity – following the signing of the Lisbon Declaration and the integration into the international coalition Business for Nature.

In Portugal, act4nature is led by BCSD Portugal in collaboration with a Steering Committee and an Advisory Board, which includes scientific partners, public and private entities, and environmental NGOs. Act4nature Portugal is a call to action for Portuguese companies to commit to reversing biodiversity loss by integrating nature into their strategies and business models. Any company, regardless of its sector and size, can join act4nature Portugal.

By joining, companies subscribe to 10 Common Commitments ([Annex I](#)), which have the following main objectives: (a) integrating biodiversity into corporate strategy and throughout the value chain, based on dialogue with stakeholders, biodiversity impact assessment, and partnership establishment, prioritizing the mitigation of these impacts and promoting nature-based solutions; (b) training employees; (c) engaging with policymakers; and (d) ensuring public reporting of the implementation of the assumed commitments.

With a view to achieving the Common Commitments, companies must define a set of individual commitments that are SMART (specific, measurable, additional, realistic, and time-bound), aligned with their activities and with a perspective of continuous improvement. The individual commitments are reviewed by BCSD Portugal and the Advisory Board, and their modification may be requested. If the commitments are not SMART, and the company cannot make them more ambitious, the application for joining act4nature Portugal may not be accepted.

Every two years of initiative execution by companies, commitments must undergo an update for increased ambition, and a performance report must be prepared for monitoring by BCSD Portugal. Individual commitments and their respective performance reports are publicly disclosed on the BCSD Portugal website.

The first wave of participation in the initiative, launched in 2020, saw the inclusion of 15 companies. These companies were required to report the progress of their

actions from the moment of joining until the end of 2022, enabling the initial analysis of the evolution of the implementation of their respective commitments. Thus, throughout 2023, BCSD Portugal facilitated the compilation, systematization, and analysis of information regarding this execution, as presented in this report.

3. Methodological note

For the analysis of the execution status of corporate commitments made in 2020, act4nature Portugal followed similar procedures as those of act4nature international.

Initially, the 15 companies that joined in 2020 were provided with a reporting framework built by the act4nature Portugal team, based on the one used by act4nature international in its assessments. They were requested to fill it out with information about the progress of each of their individual commitments.

In summary, the data to be collected were associated with four categories of information, including characterization elements summarized in Table 1 (consulting the next page).

In addition to filling out the table, some companies chose to compile and present a set of supplementary information regarding evidence and baseline monitoring data. These procedures aided the analysis, while in other cases, it was necessary to interact with the companies to address certain uncertainties regarding the reported elements, which was done through electronic communication or bilateral meetings. As a result of these procedures, it was possible to compile all the initially requested information and proceed with the analysis of the collected data.

Overall, the information from the 15 received reporting grids was compiled and validated by the act4nature Portugal team, resulting in the current report. This begins by characterizing the individual commitments made in 2020 in terms of their number, execution period, and alignment with the Common Commitments of act4nature. Subsequently, the report presents an analysis of the execution of commitments in terms of their execution status, public reporting of implementation, and external communication. Regarding the methods of verifying commitments, given the data provided by companies in this regard, it was not possible to present them in an aggregated form in this report.

Table 1. Categories and data fields included in the reporting framework used by companies that became signatories of act4nature Portugal in 2020.

CATEGORY	DATA FIELDS	OBSERVATIONS
Individual commitment undertaken in 2020	Commitment title	In line with the individual commitment made in 2020.
	Scope	Aiming to identify whether the action was carried out at the group/company level or in broader scopes.
	Indicator/Associated target	In line with the individual commitment made in 2020.
	Deadline or Implementation Period	In line with the individual commitment made in 2020.
Relation with Common Commitments	Selection of Common Commitment(s)	Aiming to identify to which Common Commitment(s) the company's individual commitment aims to respond.
Assessment	Action status	According to a pre-established list: Not started, Not carried out, In progress, Completed.
	Partial/Final action results	According to the monitoring indicators and original targets, in comparison to the baseline at the time of commitment.
	Comments	As a complement to the provided information.
Report and Communication	Implementation report	According to a pre-established list: Not carried out, Sustainability report, Specific report, Company website, Other.
	Support	For the presentation of links and supporting information for reporting, including where it is available.
	Verification methods	According to a pre-established list: No audit, Internal audit, Third-party audit, Certification, Other.
	Communication (besides report)	According to a pre-established list: Communicated, Not communicated.
	Support	For the presentation of links and supporting information for reporting, including identification of conveyed communications.

4. Signatory companies of 2020

In 2020, the first year of act4nature Portugal, there were 15 companies that joined the initiative, as shown in Figure 1. The individual commitments made by each of these companies are available for consultation on the BCSD Portugal website or through [this link](#).



Figure 1. The 15 companies that joined act4nature Portugal in 2020.

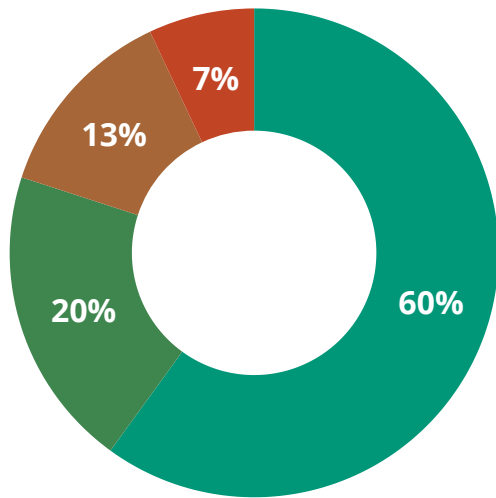
In Figure 2, a characterization of the signatory companies of 2020 is presented across three categories: size regarding the number of employees, industry sector, and headquarters location. The size of the companies varies, with the majority (60%) being large (>250 employees), 20% medium-sized (50-250 employees), 13% small (10-50 employees), and 7% micro-sized (<10 employees).

Regarding the industry sectors, most companies are from the service sector (33%) and agroforestry (20%), followed by equal proportions of companies (13%) from the water and waste, energy, and logistics and transportation sectors. There is only one company (7%) from the retail sector.

According to NUTS II regions, it was also found that most companies (60%) are headquartered in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (AML), followed by 27% in the North and 13% in the Alentejo.

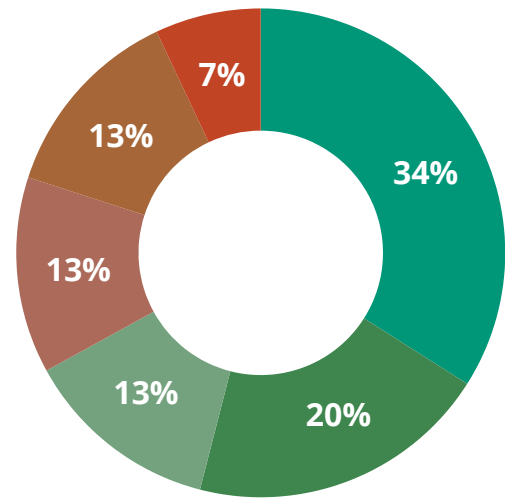
Additionally, all these companies had a history of actions and commitments in favor of biodiversity prior to joining act4nature Portugal.

a) Size



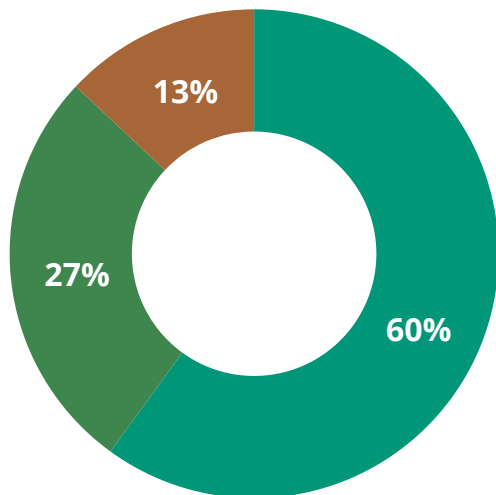
- Large enterprise (>250 employees)
- Medium enterprise (50-250 employees)
- Small enterprise (10-50 employees)
- Micro enterprise (<10 employees)

b) Industry sector



- Services
- Agroforestry
- Water and waste
- Energy
- Logistics and transportation
- Retail

c) Headquarters location



- Lisbon Metropolitan Area
- North
- Alentejo

Figure 2. Characterization of the companies that became signatories of act4nature Portugal in 2020 in terms of a) size according to the number of employees, b) industry sector, and c) headquarters location according to NUTS II regions.

5. Characterization of the corporate commitments of 2020

5.1. Commitments number

In total, the 15 companies that are signatories since 2020 undertook 165 commitments, all subject to reporting and evaluation. The number of commitments assumed by each company varied significantly, with a minimum of 5, a maximum of 20, and an average of 11 commitments.

Regardless of sometimes focusing on common elements, the diversity of commitments made in 2020 also reflects the variety of represented industry sectors. The topics and the level of ambition of these commitments are not necessarily comparable and demonstrate the different ways each company commits to biodiversity.

5.2. Commitments time frame

The duration of commitments also shows some diversity, with 40% of commitments expected to conclude within the first execution cycle of act4nature Portugal (2020-2022), in addition to 30% with an expected end beyond the execution cycle and another 30% of continuous commitments without a time limit, with an annual nature (Figure 3). Considering the typical durations of biodiversity projects and the need for regular monitoring, it is expected that several commitments may have an execution period exceeding 2 years or may be of a regular/continuous nature.

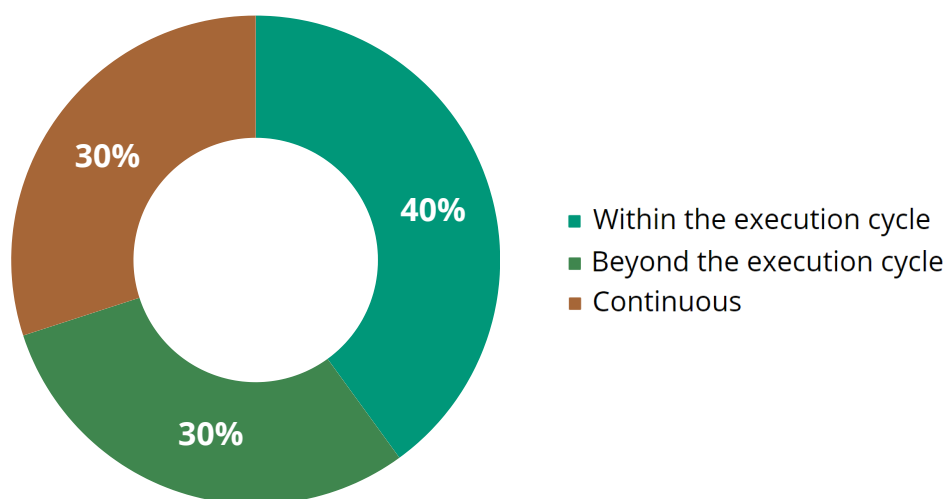


Figure 3. Characterization of the time frame of individual commitments made in 2020.

5.3. Alignment with the Common Commitments

The corporate commitments made in 2020 align with specific Common Commitments (CC) of act4nature, which are presented in [Annex I](#). Similar to what was observed in act4nature international, the 10 Common Commitments have a cross-cutting distribution and representation within the 165 corporate commitments, as shown in Figure 4.

Regardless and as observed in act4nature international, there is a lower adherence to the development of Nature-Based Solutions (CC 6) – defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as “actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore nature and ecosystems modified to effectively and adaptively address societal challenges, providing human well-being and benefits for biodiversity” – and to dialogue on biodiversity with policymakers (CC 7), each with an adherence of about 7% in the total of corporate commitments made in 2020.

On the other hand, Common Commitment 9, which pertains to mobilizing resources and partnerships to support and monitor the actions of companies in the field, was the most adhered to.

Next, with similar levels of adherence, are the Common Commitments associated with dialogue with stakeholders (CC 2), promoting the gradual integration of biodiversity into value chains (CC 4), training and/or awareness of employees (CC 8), and preventing, reducing, or compensating for impacts (CC 5).

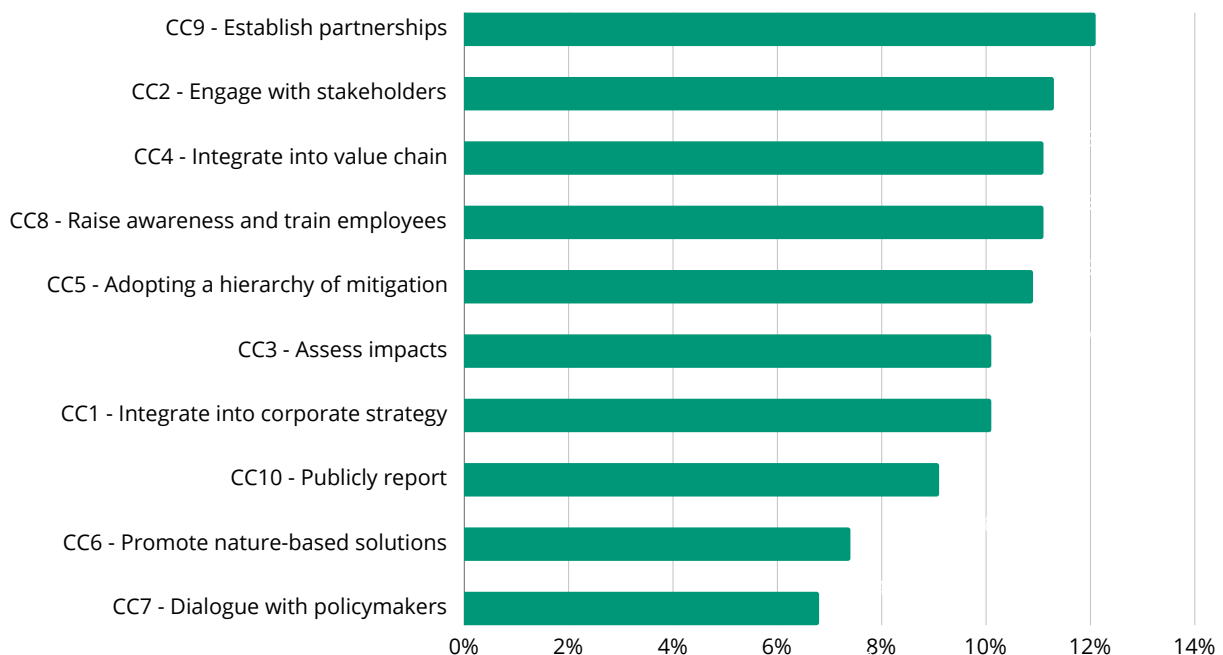


Figure 4. Fraction of corporate commitments from 2020 that align with each Common Commitment (CC).

6. I. Analysis of the execution of corporate commitments

6.1. Status of commitments execution

Most commitments undertaken by the companies (66%) were fulfilled as expected for the period under review (2020-2022): 36% of them are completed, while 30% are actions with a more extended or continuous time frame that are in progress with an intermediate/annual goal achieved.

Additionally, 21% of commitments are in progress towards temporal goals that extend beyond December 31, 2022. The portion of commitments in progress obtained, whether those that have already achieved an intermediate/annual goal (30%), or the rest (21%) is expected since a considerable fraction of commitments has a predicted end beyond the execution cycle, as observed in Chapter 5.2.

Only a small fraction of commitments (13%) has not been initiated or executed. The commitments that were not started (11%) are associated with implementation deadlines extending beyond December 31, 2022, justifying the apparent delay in starting their execution. Additionally, the small number of actions that were not executed as planned (2%) is justified by the need for their redefinition, particularly due to constraints associated with the initial definition of the commitment itself or difficulties in evaluating the initially proposed indicators for monitoring.

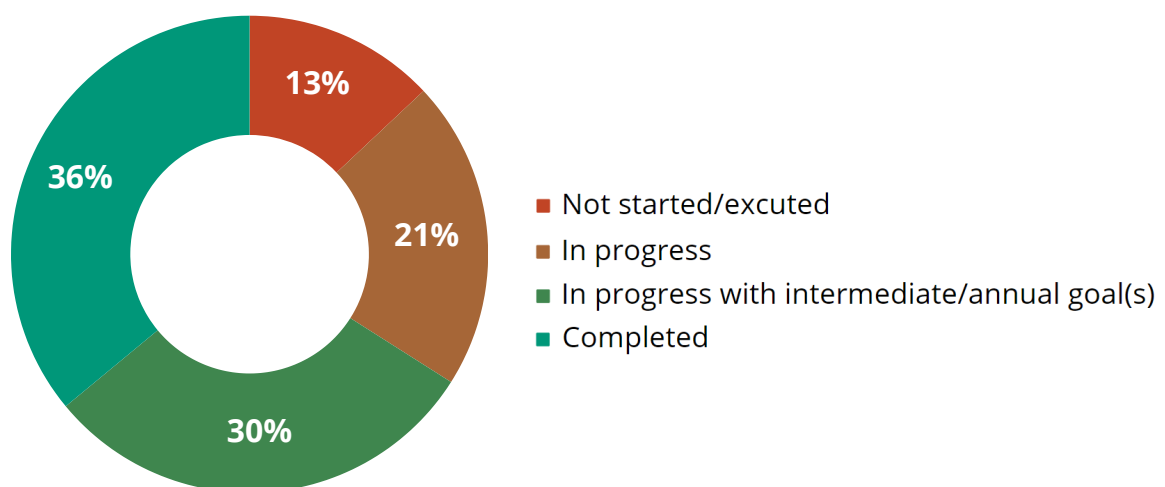


Figura 5. Status of execution of corporate commitments made in 2020 during the first execution cycle of act4nature Portugal (2020-2022).

6.2. Public reporting of the implementation of commitments

In accordance with Common Commitment 10, the state of implementation/execution of corporate commitments must be publicly reported. In this regard, it was found that the vast majority (85%) of individual commitments were reported publicly, although the reporting methods used varied.

The primary reporting method for the commitments was the Sustainability Report or equivalent (36%), followed by a specific report for act4nature Portugal (27%). The company's website (20%) and other reporting mechanisms (17%) are also used for this purpose.

However, a fraction of commitments (15%), while not significant, has not been subject to other reporting beyond what was provided to the act4nature Portugal team for analysis. Nonetheless, it is considered that all individual commitments should be reported publicly, regardless of their execution status.

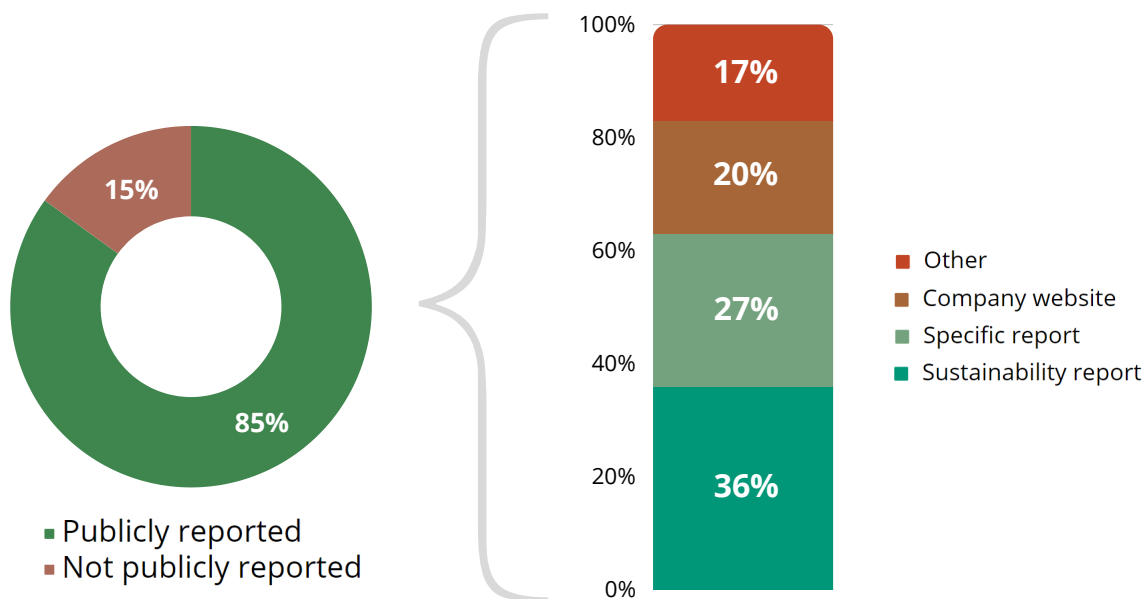


Figure 6. Public reporting of the implementation/execution of individual commitments by companies (beyond the reporting for act4nature Portugal). In the case of commitments reported publicly, forms of reporting used.

6.3. Commitments communication

The external communication/dissemination of commitments, in addition to public implementation reporting, is crucial for greater stakeholder engagement and public recognition of the commitments made.

In this regard, most commitments were communicated/disclosed (62%), but there is, however, a significant fraction of commitments that were not communicated/disclosed (38%). This fraction is mainly justified by the existence of commitments not initiated/executed and commitments that are in progress, as indicated in Chapter 6.1.

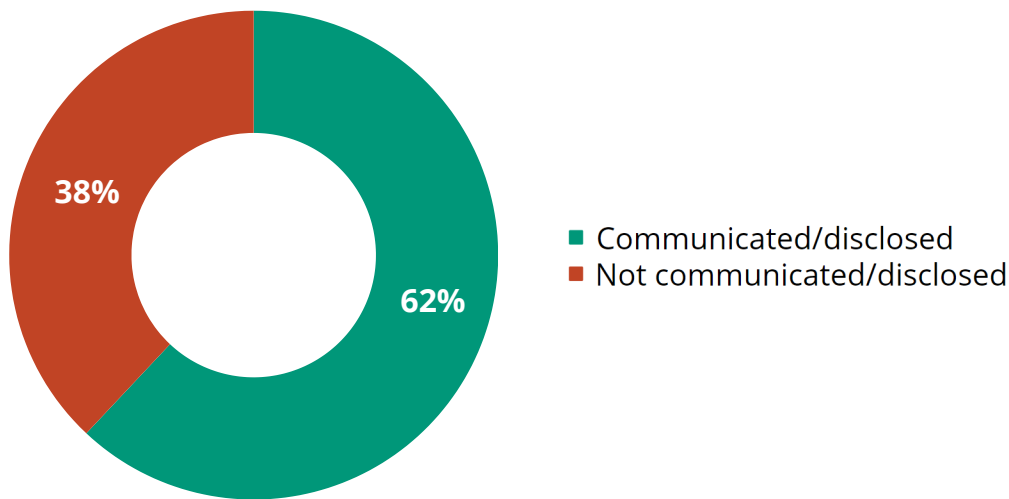


Figure 7. Communication/Disclosure of commitments by companies (beyond reporting).

7. Conclusions

This report synthesizes, in an aggregated manner, the main characteristics of the individual commitments undertaken by the 15 companies that became signatories of act4nature Portugal in 2020, their status of execution for the period of 2020-2022, as well as how they were reported and communicated.

The 15 companies undertook a total of 165 commitments, which have execution deadlines occurring during and after the execution cycle, as well as commitments of a regular/continuous nature. The addressed topics of the commitments are also diverse, with the majority focused on mobilizing resources and partnerships to support companies' actions in the field (Common Commitment 9), and the least on the development of Nature-Based Solutions (Common Commitment 6) and dialogue on biodiversity with policymakers (Common Commitment 7).

The variety observed in the individual commitments of companies, like what is observed in act4nature international, confirms the diversity of approaches adopted by companies regarding their internal and external strategies to commit to biodiversity and ecosystem service promotion objectives. This diversity results from the intrinsic complexity of any approach to biodiversity conservation and promotion by a company, combined with the diversity of sectors, value chains, business models, and the size of participating companies. This fact reinforces the relevance and importance of the act4nature Portugal initiative, which, without focusing on sectoral approaches, allows participating companies to define their commitments and impacts in the most suitable and adjusted way to the possibilities and realities they face.

For the execution cycle under analysis (2020-2022), it was observed that most commitments made by the companies (66%) are in a favorable execution state, either completed or in progress with intermediate/annual goals achieved. Additionally, 21% of commitments are progressing towards temporal goals extending beyond 2022, and only a small fraction (13%) has not been initiated/executed. It was also noted that most commitments were publicly reported (85%), using different means, and communicated/disseminated externally (62%). Overall, the results of the 2020-2022 execution cycle indicate encouraging progress towards the achievement of commitments proposed by companies, especially considering the unforeseen circumstances and challenges imposed by the pandemic situation during this period.

Some opportunities for improvement were also identified in the commitments of the companies and their respective execution. The 12 companies that renewed their commitment to act4nature Portugal, which was associated to a review/update of individual commitments for the next execution cycle of the initiative, have already introduced some improvements in defining commitments. The aim is to promote the adoption of commitments that are more specific to biodiversity-related themes and increasingly SMART and monitorable, both in terms of execution and impact.

Being the first execution report of act4nature Portugal, and considering the diversity of commitments and responses obtained, this document has already allowed for opportunities for improvement to be identified and implemented in future reports, particularly in terms of the information collected on the execution of corporate commitments to complement and enrich the analyses conducted.

Annex – The 10 Common Commitments of act4nature

- 1.** Integrate biodiversity into our corporate strategy, founding our action on available scientific knowledge.
- 2.** Engage in dialogue with all our stakeholders regarding their expectations and our impacts, actions and progress.
- 3.** Assess the various components of biodiversity of concern to us, using direct and indirect impact indicators, risk and performance indicators and, when relevant for decision making purposes, assess in economic terms our impacts and our reliance on smoothly functioning ecosystems.
- 4.** Promote the progressive integration of biological diversity into decisions throughout our value chains, from the production of natural raw materials to the final stage of our products life cycle after use by consumers.
- 5.** Primarily prevent, reduce and ultimately offset our impacts, by seeking on a case-by-case basis no net loss as a bottom line or even a net gain of biodiversity in our activities and geographical areas of influence, and by factoring in the need for ecosystems to adapt to climate change.
- 6.** Give priority to the development of Nature-based Solutions, ensuring that they are implemented in a science-based and biodiversity-friendly manner, and promoting a certain variety in such solutions.
- 7.** Incorporate biodiversity into our dialogues with policymakers so that this issue is progressively embedded into public policies. When invited to do so, contribute to the national biodiversity strategies of countries where we operate.
- 8.** Raise awareness of and train our employees in biodiversity and its relation to their jobs. Promote and encourage nature-friendly initiatives by them and providing due recognition to such actions and practices.
- 9.** Mobilise resources and establish appropriate partnerships to support and monitor our actions taken in the field.
- 10.** Publicly report on the implementation of these commitments and of our individual commitments set out below.