

A photograph of a wooden boardwalk path winding through a lush forest filled with large green ferns. The path is made of wooden planks and has wooden railings on both sides. The background is a dense canopy of trees and ferns.

*act*4nature
Portugal

Execution Report 2021 - 2023

december 2024

 **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 10 Common Commitments that must be implemented through a set of individual commitments. Every three years of the initiative's implementation by companies, the performance in the undertaken commitments should be reported.

The second year of the initiative, 2021, saw the participation of 12 companies of varied sizes and sectors. Throughout 2024, most of these companies reported the performance on their individual commitments in the first execution cycle (2021-2023), 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 2021, their execution status for the period 2021-2023, as well as how they were reported and communicated.

In 2021, a total of 100 commitments were assumed, representing an average of 8 commitments per company. Most of these commitments extend beyond the execution cycle (2021-2023); however, 29% of the commitments are scheduled to end within this cycle. The topics addressed by the commitments are highly diverse, with a larger share focused on integrating biodiversity into corporate strategy, associated with Common Commitment 1. On the other hand, the least addressed topic was dialogue on biodiversity with policymakers (Common Commitment 7).

For the execution cycle under analysis (2021-2023), it was found that most of the commitments made by companies (79%) were fulfilled, either by being completed or by being in progress with intermediate/annual targets achieved. Additionally, 13% of the commitments are in progress, and only a small fraction (8%) has not been initiated/executed. It was also noted that most commitments were publicly reported (78%) and externally communicated/disclosed (63%).

Overall, the results of the 2021-2023 execution cycle indicate positive progress toward fulfilling the commitments proposed by companies and achieving the established targets. Some opportunities for improvement were identified in the companies' commitments and their execution, most of which were taken into consideration during the renewal/update of the commitments made by the companies for the next execution cycle of act4nature Portugal.

Regarding the preparation of act4nature Portugal execution reports, this report continues to highlight some opportunities for improvement, particularly in terms of the information gathered on the execution of business commitments, to complement and enrich the analyses carried out.



2. The act4nature Portugal initiative

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

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. The initiative commits companies to reversing biodiversity loss by integrating nature into their strategies and business models. Any company, despite the sector and size, can join act4nature Portugal.

By joining, companies subscribe to 10 Common Commitments ([Annex I](#)), which have the main objectives: (a) integrating biodiversity into corporate strategy and the entire 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.

Every three years of initiative implementation by companies, the commitments must be updated to reflect greater ambition, and a performance report must be prepared for monitoring by BCSD Portugal. The individual commitments and their respective performance reports are publicly disclosed on BCSD Portugal's website.

The second wave of adherence to the initiative, launched in 2021, included 12 companies, which were required to report on the progress of their actions from the moment of joining until the end of 2023. This aimed to analyze the evolution of the implementation of their respective commitments. Of the 12 companies, 10 provided information on the execution of their commitments. Accordingly, throughout 2024, BCSD Portugal promoted the compilation, systematization, and analysis of this execution information, which is presented in this report.

3. Methodological note

For the analysis of the execution status of corporate commitments made in 2021, act4nature Portugal followed similar procedures as those of act4nature international.

Initially, the 12 companies that joined in 2021 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 10 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 2021 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 2021.

CATEGORY	DATA FIELDS	OBSERVATIONS
Individual commitment undertaken in 2021	Commitment title	In line with the individual commitment made in 2021.
	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 2021.
	Deadline or Implementation Period	In line with the individual commitment made in 2021.
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 2021

In 2021, the first year of act4nature Portugal, there were 12 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](#).



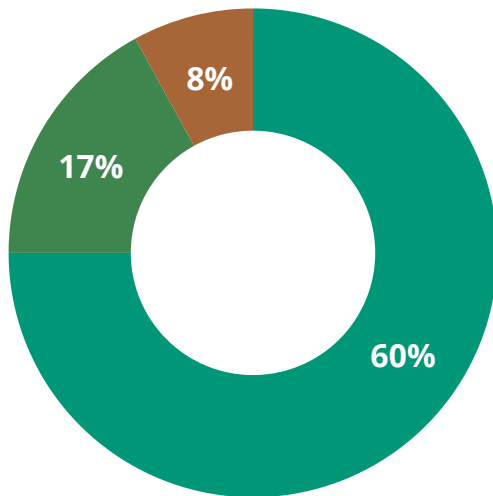
Figure 1. The 15 companies that joined act4nature Portugal in 2021.

In Figure 2, a characterization of the signatory companies of 2021 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 (75%) being large (>250 employees), 17% SMEs (10-250 employees), and 8% micro-sized (<10 employees).

Regarding the sectors of activity, most companies belong to the services sector (25%), followed by the agri-food (17%) and hospitality and catering (17%) sectors. These are followed by equal shares of companies (8%) in the retail, transport, agroforestry, industry, and telecommunications sectors.

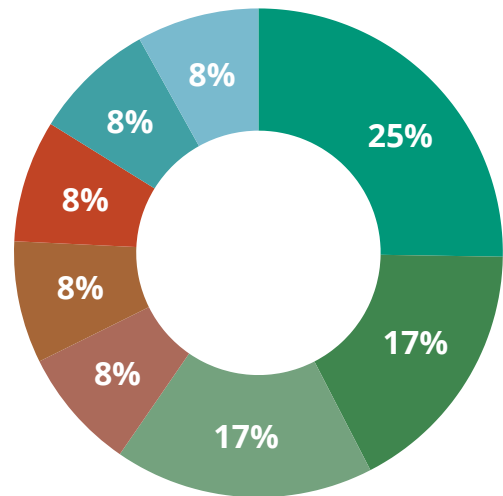
According to the NUTS II classification, it was also observed that most companies (67%) are headquartered in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (AML), followed by 17% in the Centre region and 8% both in the Alentejo and the North.

a) Size



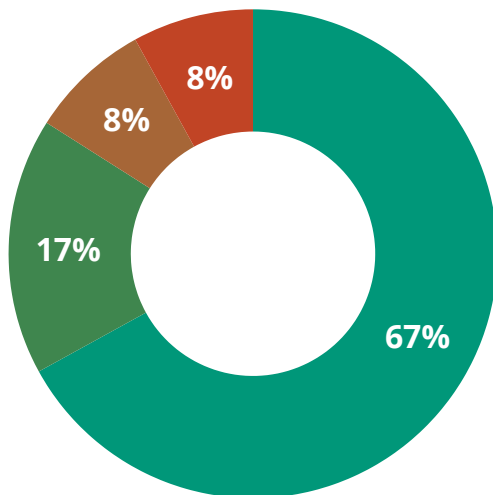
- Large enterprise (>250 employees)
- SME (10-250 employees)
- Micro enterprise (<10 employees)

b) Industry sector



- Services
- Agri-food
- Hospitality and Catering
- Retail
- Transport
- Agroforestry
- Industry
- Telecommunications

c) Headquarters location



- AML
- Center
- North
- Alentejo

Figure 2. Characterization of the companies that became signatories of act4nature Portugal in 2021 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 2021

5.1. Commitments number

In total, the 12 companies that are signatories since 2021 undertook 100 commitments, all subject to reporting and evaluation. The number of commitments assumed by each company varied significantly, with a minimum of 4, a maximum of 16, and an average of 8 commitments.

Regardless of sometimes focusing on common elements, the diversity of commitments made in 2021 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 the commitments also shows some diversity, with 47% scheduled to end after the execution cycle, 29% set to conclude within the second execution cycle of act4nature Portugal (2021-2023), and 24% being continuous commitments with no fixed end date, undertaken on an annual basis (Figure 3). Considering the typical durations of biodiversity projects and the need for regular monitoring, it is expected that several commitments will have an execution period longer than two years or be of a regular/continuous nature.

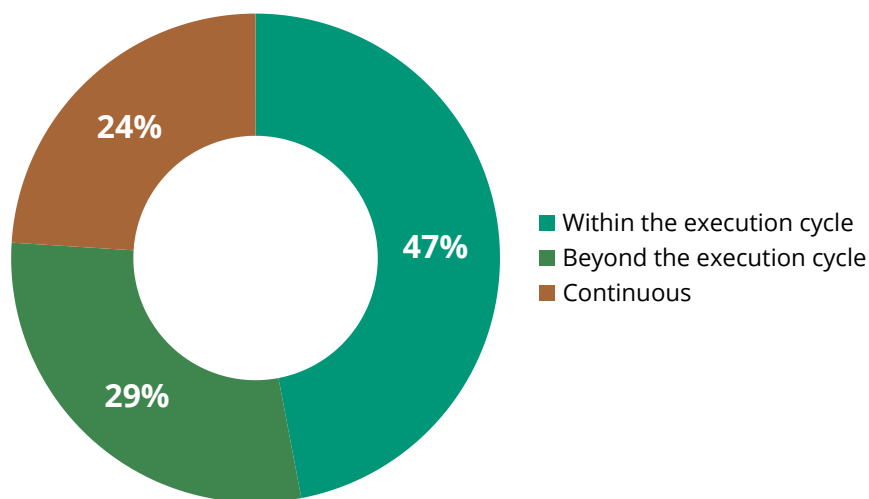


Figure 3. Characterization of the time frame of individual commitments made in 2021.

5.3. Alignment with the Common Commitments

The corporate commitments made in 2021 align with specific Common Commitments (CC) of act4nature, which are presented in [Annex I](#). As observed in act4nature international, the 10 Common Commitments have a cross-cutting distribution and representation within the 100 corporate commitments, as shown in Figure 4.

Even so, there is notably lower adherence to dialogue on biodiversity with policymakers (Common Commitment 7), with only about 14% of all business commitments made in 2021 addressing this area.

On the other hand, Common Commitment 1, which pertains to integrating biodiversity into corporate strategy, recorded the highest level of adherence. This was followed by Common Commitments related to reporting information (Commitment 10), promoting nature-based solutions (Commitment 6), and establishing partnerships (Commitment 9).



Figure 4. Percentage of corporate commitments from 2021 that align with each Common Commitment (CC).

6. Analysis of the execution of corporate commitments

6.1. Status of commitments execution

Most commitments made by companies (79%) were fulfilled as planned for the period under analysis (2021-2023): 29% of the commitments have been completed, while 51% are ongoing actions with a broader timeframe or of a continuous nature, with intermediate/annual targets achieved.

Additionally, 13% of the commitments are in progress with timelines extending beyond December 31, 2023. The proportion of ongoing commitments, including those that have already achieved the intermediate/annual target (51%) or the remaining ones (13%), is expected, as a considerable portion of commitments has a planned end date after the execution cycle, as noted in [chapter 5.2](#).

Only a small fraction of commitments (8%) have not been initiated or executed. These may be associated with implementation timelines extending beyond December 31, 2023, or may require redefinition, particularly due to constraints related to the initial definition of the commitment itself or difficulties in evaluating the indicators initially proposed for monitoring.

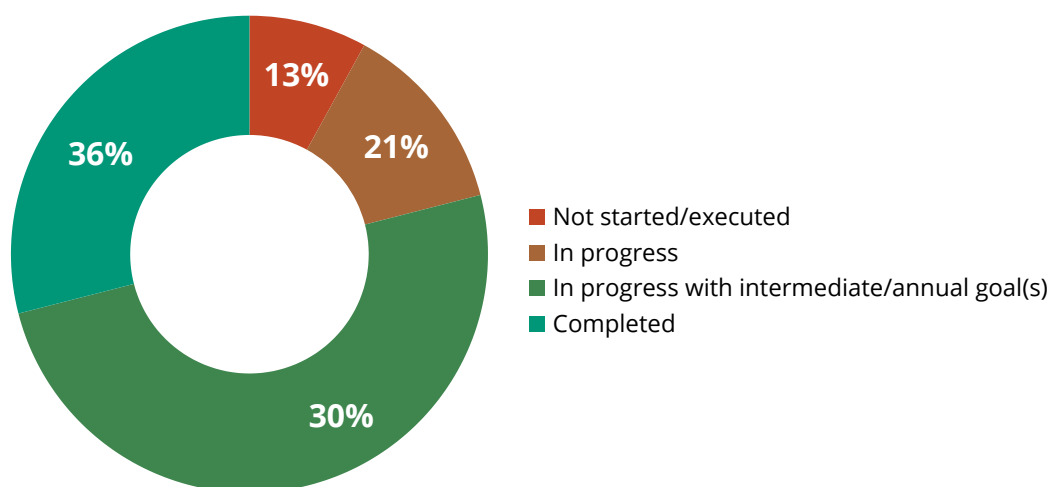


Figura 5. Status of execution of corporate commitments made in 2021 during the second execution cycle of act4nature Portugal (2021-2023).

6.2. Public reporting of the implementation of commitments

According to Common Commitment 10, with which companies commit, the status of implementation/execution of business commitments must be reported publicly. In this regard, it was found that the vast majority (78%) of individual commitments were reported publicly, although the reporting methods used were varied.

The main method of reporting commitments was the Sustainability Report or equivalent (40%), followed by the company's website (31%). Other reporting mechanisms (16%) and specific reports for act4nature Portugal (13%) were also used for this purpose.

However, a fraction of commitments (22%) has not been reported beyond what was provided to the act4nature Portugal team for analysis, though this fraction is not significant. It is considered that all individual commitments should be publicly reported, regardless of their execution status.

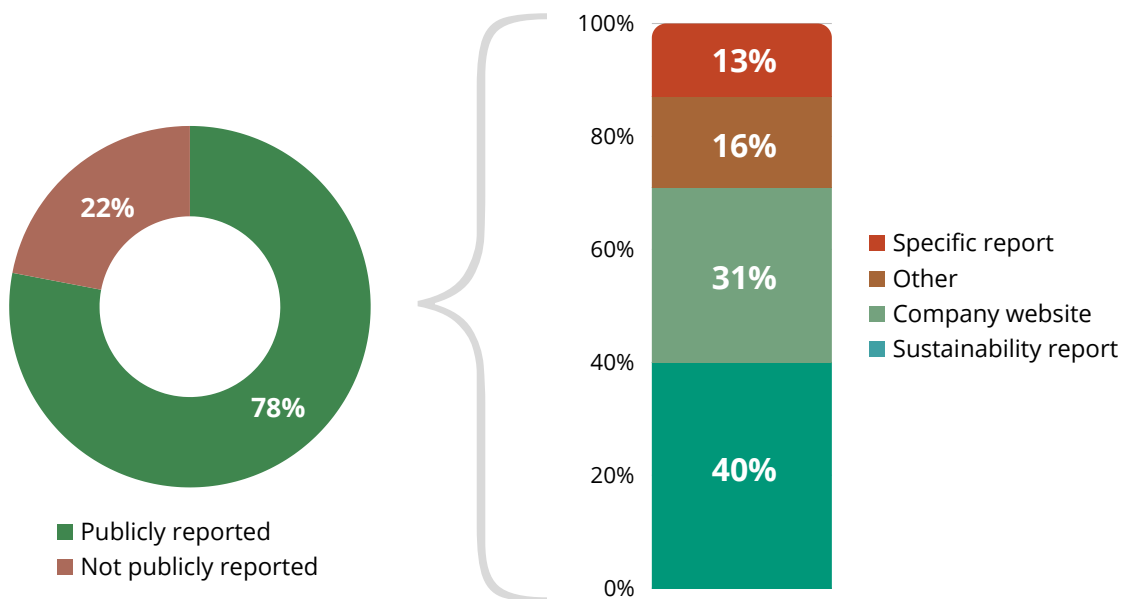


Figure 6. Public reporting of the implementation/execution of individual commitments by companies (beyond the reporting for act4nature Portugal). In the case of commitments reported publicly, forms of reporting used.

6.3. Commitments communication

External communication/disclosure of commitments, beyond the public reporting of implementation, is crucial for greater stakeholder engagement and public recognition of the commitments made.

In this regard, many commitments were communicated/disclosed (63%), although a considerable fraction of commitments were not communicated/disclosed (37%). This fraction is largely explained by the existence of commitments that were not initiated/executed and commitments that are still in progress, as indicated in [Chapter 6.1](#).

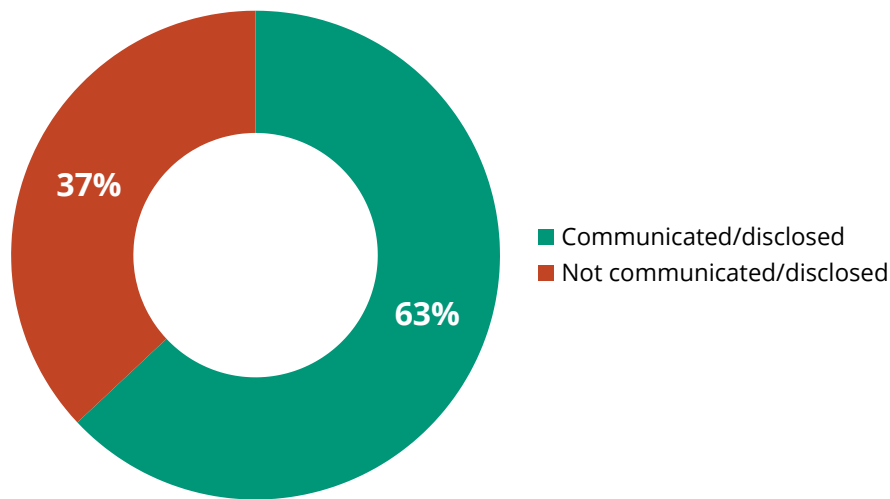


Figure 7. Communication/Disclosure of commitments by companies (beyond reporting).

7. Conclusions

This report provides an aggregated summary of the key characteristics of the individual commitments made by the 12 companies that became signatories of act4nature Portugal in 2021, their execution status for the 2021-2023 period, as well as how most of these commitments were reported and communicated.

The 12 companies made a total of 100 commitments, which have execution deadlines during and after the execution cycle, as well as commitments of a regular/continuous nature. The topics addressed by the commitments are varied, with the largest portion focused on integrating biodiversity into the companies' strategies (Common Commitment 1), and the smallest on dialogue about biodiversity with policymakers (Common Commitment 7).

The observed variety in the companies' individual commitments, like what is seen in act4nature international, confirms the diversity of approaches adopted by companies regarding their internal and external strategies for committing to biodiversity and ecosystem service goals. This diversity stems from the combination of the intrinsic complexity of any company's approach to biodiversity conservation and promotion, along with the diversity of sectors, value chains, business models, and the size of the companies involved. This fact reinforces the relevance and importance of the act4nature Portugal initiative, which, by not focusing on sectoral approaches, allows signatory companies to define their commitments and impacts in the most suitable and appropriate way to the possibilities and realities they face.

For the execution cycle under analysis (2021-2023), it was found that most commitments made by companies (79%) were fulfilled, either by being completed or by being in progress with intermediate/annual targets achieved. Additionally, 13% of commitments are in progress with timelines extending beyond 2021, and only a small fraction (8%) has not been initiated/executed. It was also noted that most commitments were publicly reported (78%), using various methods, and externally communicated/disclosed (63%).

Overall, the results of the 2021-2023 execution cycle indicate positive progress toward fulfilling the commitments proposed by companies and achieving the established targets, especially considering the unforeseen circumstances and challenges imposed by the pandemic context during that period.

Some opportunities for improvement were also identified in the companies' commitments and their execution. Companies that renewed their commitment to act4nature Portugal, which involved reviewing/updating their individual commitments for the next execution cycle of the initiative, have already introduced improvements in defining their commitments. These improvements aim to promote the adoption of more specific commitments related to biodiversity topics, ensuring that they are increasingly SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) and measurable, both in terms of execution and impact.

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.



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Discover more:

www.bcsdportugal.org/act4nature-portugal/

an initiative:

