



Assessment of Syngenta's approach to addressing biodiversity loss

Syngenta: Overview

Syngenta AG is a seed and agricultural chemicals company based in Basel, Switzerland. The company is owned by ChemChina and is not publicly listed.

Market cap



Syngenta is a private company and does not have a market cap. The company's sales revenue in 2022 was \$33.4 billionⁱ.



2022 pesticide sales

\$16.14 billionⁱⁱ



Highly Hazardous Pesticides

≥50



Top-selling Highly Hazardous Pesticides in 2018

1) Thiamethoxam 2) Lambda-Cyhalothrin 3) Glyphosate 4) Paraquat 5) Chlorantraniliprole



EU-banned pesticides notified for export in 2018

66,411 tonnesⁱⁱⁱ

Product Portfolio	E1.1 The company does not produce or sell any HHPs	Not achieved
	E1.2 The company does not sell EU-banned pesticides outside of Europe	Not achieved
Impact assessment	E2.1 The company assesses biodiversity-related impacts, dependencies and risks	Not achieved
	E2.2a The company uses a clearly defined methodology to assess downstream impact of all pesticide products	Not achieved
	2.2b The methodology was developed in partnership with and peer reviewed by independent experts	Not achieved
Biodiversity strategy	E3.1 The company has a target that aligns with GBF Target 7 to reduce pesticide risks to biodiversity by half by 2030	Not achieved
	E3.2 The company has a commitment to phase out HHPs by 2035	Not achieved
	E3.3 The company has a management plan for high-risk locations in its value chain	Not achieved
	E3.4 The company has a biodiversity strategy that includes relevant targets and commitments	Achieved
Disclosures	E4.1 The company fully reports against GRI 304 and has committed to align with the TNFD and GBF Target 15	Not achieved
	E4.2 The company publishes a list of active ingredients and discloses sales volumes of HHPs	Not achieved
	E4.3 The company discloses at-risk locations in its value chain, including areas of biodiversity importance	Not achieved
	E4.4 The company discloses toxicological studies of all active ingredients	Not achieved
Product innovation	5.1 The company assesses inherent risks of new solutions and ensures they pose lowest possible risks	Not achieved
	5.2 The company has a target for expanding safer and sustainable alternatives	Achieved
	5.3 The company's innovation practices include replacing hazardous products with lower risk alternatives	Not achieved

Syngenta poses significant risks to biodiversity through its product portfolio by producing a high number of HHPs and exporting considerably more pesticides banned for use in the EU outside of Europe than any other assessed company. Syngenta is transparent regarding its biodiversity-related targets, metrics, and data used to assess progress, however, none of these commitments aim to reduce the biodiversity-related impacts or risks of Syngenta's products, nor does the company appear to assess the effects of its products on biodiversity throughout its value chain.

INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

- **Biodiversity strategy:** Syngenta provides detailed methodologies, metrics and data regarding its existing biodiversity commitments. This indicates it has the capacity to assess and disclose against more effective commitments to reduce the risks of pesticide products.
- **Product innovation:** Syngenta has set targets for investing in sustainable solutions.

AREAS OF CONCERN

- **Product portfolio:** Syngenta produces over 50 HHPs and, in 2018, planned to export 66,411 tonnes of pesticides banned for use in the EU – this is over 20 times the amount notified by the next largest EU-based exporter company assessed (Bayer).
- **Impact assessment:** Syngenta does not disclose a methodology to assess the impacts on or risks to biodiversity from all pesticide products throughout its value chain.
- **Product innovation:** Syngenta does not disclose how it assesses biodiversity-related risks of new products using its Sustainability Investment Criteria, and this framework does not include replacing hazardous products with alternatives.

Assessment

1. Product portfolio

1.1 Expectation: The company does not produce any products with active ingredients that appear in Pesticide Action Network’s list of Highly Hazardous Pesticides.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta produces at least 50 active ingredients that are Highly Hazardous Pesticides.

1.2 Expectation: If the company is incorporated in a country subject to European Union pesticide use restrictions, it does not sell pesticides that are banned for use in the EU to other countries.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

In 2018, Syngenta notified for export 66,411 tonnes of pesticides banned for use in the EU to other countries.

2. Impact assessment

2.1 Expectation: The company assesses its pesticide-related impacts and dependencies on biodiversity, and the risks arising from these, across its full value chain, including downstream impacts.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta does not publicly state whether it assesses pesticide-related impacts, dependencies or risks to biodiversity.

2.2a Expectation: The company uses a clearly defined methodology to assess its impact on biodiversity from all pesticide products, which includes considering how inherent risks of a product materialise throughout the company's value chain and impact biodiversity at the location-level.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta does not disclose an impact assessment methodology that it uses to assess the biodiversity impact of its pesticide products.

Syngenta's Sustainability Investment Criteria includes biodiversity-related criteria, but is only applied to products in development^{iv}. See Expectation 5.1 for more information on this methodology.

2.2b Expectation: This methodology was developed in partnership with, and peer reviewed by, independent experts, as evidenced by a disclosure of all relevant details of the company's relationship and the nature of collaboration with all experts involved.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta does not appear to have a methodology to assess the biodiversity impact of all its products. The company does not indicate whether its Sustainability Investment Criteria have been developed with or reviewed by independent experts.

3. Biodiversity strategy

3.1 Expectation: In alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework's Target 7, the company has commitments and targets that seek to reduce the company's impact on or risk to biodiversity from its pesticide products by 50 per cent by 2030.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta's targets do not align with GBF Target 7.

Syngenta's biodiversity-related targets include:

- Strive for the lowest residues in crops and the environment
- Enhance biodiversity and soil health on three million hectares of rural farmland every year.

Syngenta discloses methodologies for measuring progress against these targets and discloses relevant data^v.

3.2 Expectation: The company has committed to phase out production of Highly Hazardous Pesticides by 2035.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta has not disclosed a commitment to phase out production of HHPs.

3.3 Expectation: The company has a management plan for locations within its downstream value chain that are at medium or high risk of negative biodiversity impacts from pesticide use, including areas of biodiversity importance. This plan includes restricting sales of some products to at-risk locations.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta has not disclosed a management plan to protect locations in its value chain at medium or high risk of biodiversity loss from pesticide use.

3.4 Expectation: The company has a clear biodiversity strategy, which sets out how it will meet biodiversity-related commitments and targets.

ASSESSMENT ACHIEVED

Syngenta's Good Growth Plan includes accelerating innovation for farmers and nature; striving for carbon neutral agriculture; helping people stay safe and healthy; and partnering for impact. The strategy has clear targets with precise methodologies, against which progress is reported^{vi}.

4. Disclosures

4.1 Expectation: The company's biodiversity disclosures fully align with standards set by the Global Reporting Initiative 304 guidance on biodiversity. The company has committed to implement the disclosure framework set by the Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures and to report biodiversity-related impacts, dependencies and risks in alignment with Global Biodiversity Framework Target 15.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta states that it reports against only one of the four topics required for disclosure by GRI 304^{vii}.

Syngenta has not committed to align with or report against the TNFD framework or GBF Target 15.

4.2 Expectation: The company publishes an exhaustive list of active ingredients included in its products and discloses annual sales volumes of Highly Hazardous Pesticides.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta does not disclose this information.

4.3 Expectation: The company discloses locations where its pesticide products are used that have been identified as at-risk, including those at medium or high risk of negative biodiversity impacts from pesticide use and those in or near areas of biodiversity importance.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta does not disclose this information.

4.4 Expectation: The company discloses toxicological studies of all active ingredients included in its product portfolio, including all studies submitted to regulators for product approval.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta provides contact information through which individuals can request access to safety data^{viii}. However, the company does not publicly disclose any studies or summaries of studies of its active ingredients.

5. Product innovation

5.1 Expectation: The company assesses the inherent risks of proposed agricultural solutions or those in development and ensures all new solutions pose the lowest possible risks to biodiversity.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

Syngenta uses its Sustainability Investment Criteria to assess whether its investments constitute ‘sustainable agriculture breakthroughs’^{ix}.

Through this process, Syngenta assesses how potential investments perform against five outcomes, including the biodiversity-related outcomes ‘improve soil health and support climate smart agriculture’ and ‘protect natural resources’. Syngenta does not disclose the metrics that are used to assess how products achieve these outcomes. As a result, it is not clear whether this process considers inherent risks that proposed solutions pose to biodiversity.

Investments only need to meet one of the five ‘breakthrough outcomes’ to be considered ‘breakthrough’ investments, which contributes to Syngenta’s sustainable agriculture breakthroughs target (see Expectation 5.2). For this reason, the company does not appear to ensure that all proposed investments pose the lowest possible risks to biodiversity.

5.2 Expectation: The company has a target (such as sales, portion of product portfolio, or research and development spending) for expanding safer and sustainable alternatives.

ASSESSMENT ACHIEVED

Syngenta has committed to:

- Invest \$2 billion in sustainable agriculture breakthroughs
- Deliver two new sustainable technology breakthroughs per year^x.

5.3 Expectation: The company’s innovation practices explicitly include replacing hazardous products with lower risk alternatives.

ASSESSMENT NOT ACHIEVED

This principle is not included in Syngenta’s Sustainability Investment Criteria.

References

- i Syngenta Group (2023) Syngenta Group reports record \$33.4 billion sales and \$5.6 billion EBITDA in 2022. Available at: <https://www.syngentagroup.com/en/media/syngenta-news/year/2023/syngenta-group-reports-record-334-billion-sales-and-56-billion-ebitda>
- ii Syngenta (2023) Financial Report 2022. Available at: <https://www.syngenta.com/sites/syngenta/files/bond-investor-information/financial-results/financial-report-2022.pdf>
- iii Dataset available for download at: <https://www.publiceye.ch/en/topics/pesticides/banned-in-europe>
- iv Syngenta (2019) Sustainability Investment Criteria. Available at: <https://www.syngenta.com/sites/syngenta/files/GRI/Sustainability-Investment-Criteria.pdf>
- v Syngenta (2023) Basis of Preparation: ESG Report 2022. Available at: <https://www.syngenta.com/sites/syngenta/files/sustainability/reporting-sustainability/Syngenta-Basis-of-Preparation-2022.pdf>
- vi Syngenta (2022) ESG Report 2021. Available at: <https://www.syngenta.com/sites/syngenta/files/sustainability/reporting-sustainability/Syngenta-AG-ESG-Report-2021.pdf>
- vii Syngenta (2022) ESG Report 2021. (Page 103)
- viii Syngenta (2023) Corporate Governance at Syngenta. Available at: <https://www.syngenta.com/en/company/governance>
- ix Syngenta (2019) Sustainability Investment Criteria. Available at: <https://www.syngenta.com/sites/syngenta/files/GRI/Sustainability-Investment-Criteria.pdf>
- x Syngenta (2023) Good Growth Plan: Accelerate Innovation for Farmers and Nature.

Disclaimer

ShareAction does not provide investment advice.

The information herein is not intended to provide and does not constitute financial or investment advice. ShareAction makes no representation regarding the advisability or suitability of investing or not in any particular financial product, shares, securities, company, investment fund, pension or other vehicle, or of using the services of any particular organisation, consultant, asset manager, broker or other provider of investment services. A decision to invest or not, or to use the services of any such provider should not be made in reliance on any of the statements made here. You should seek independent and regulated advice on whether the decision to do so is appropriate for you and the potential consequences thereof. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information is correct, ShareAction, its employees and agents cannot guarantee its accuracy and shall not be liable for any claims or losses of any nature in connection with information contained in this document, including (but not limited to) lost profits or punitive or consequential damages or claims in negligence. Fairshare Educational Foundation (t/a ShareAction) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales number 05013662 (registered address 63/66 Hatton Garden, Fifth Floor, Suite 23, London UK, EC1N 8LE) and a registered charity number 1117244, VAT registration number GB 211 1469 53.

About ShareAction

ShareAction is a NGO working globally to define the highest standards for responsible investment and drive change until these standards are adopted worldwide. We mobilise investors to take action to improve labour standards, tackle climate change and address pressing global health issues. Over 15 years, ShareAction has used its powerful toolkit of research, corporate campaigns, policy advocacy and public mobilisation to drive responsibility into the heart of mainstream investment. Our vision is a world where the financial system serves our planet and its people.

Visit shareaction.org or follow us [@ShareAction](https://twitter.com/ShareAction) to find out more.

Authors

Eve Gleeson

ShareAction»

shareaction.org
info@shareaction.org
+44 (0)20 7403 7800

Runway East,
2 Whitechapel Road,
London, E1 1EW, UK

Registered Charity
Number: 1117244

EU Transparency
Register number:
75791956264-20