

Alignment of criteria identifying areas of biodiversity importance and *Critical Habitat* in IFC PS6

Using biodiversity designations to assess the likelihood of occurrence of Critical Habitat

Key messages

This briefing note discusses the alignment of criteria triggering the description of *Critical Habitat* under IFC PS6, with the selection criteria for 14 established site-scale designations of areas of biodiversity importance. Results are summarized in the table below.

In addition, five regional-scale designations are identified, which encompass biodiversity values of relevance to Critical Habitat. These are: Biodiversity Hotspots, Centres of Plant Diversity (CPD), Crisis Ecoregions, Endemic Bird Areas (EBA) and Global 200 Ecoregions.

The Critical Habitat assessment process is required for projects seeking funding from the IFC or Equator Principles Financial Institutions, or for those using Critical Habitat as a mechanism to identify biodiversity value. Where established biodiversity designations exist, understanding how these align with Critical Habitat criteria is useful in supporting this assessment.

Critical Habitat selection criterion:	(i) CR and EN species	(ii) Endemic and/or restricted-range species	(iii) Migratory species and/or congregatory species	(iv) Highly threatened and/or unique ecosystems	(v) Key evolutionary processes	Status
Protected areas						
Emerald Network Sites	●	●	●	●	○	Not cited
MPA (OSPAR)	●	●	●	●	○	Not cited
Natura 2000 (SAC)	●	●	○	○	○	Not cited
Natura 2000 (SPA)	●	●	●	○	○	Not cited
Natural WHS	● Crit. x)	● Crit. ix), x)	● Crit. x)	● Crit. x)	○	CH
Ramsar site	● Crit. 2	● Crit. 3	● Crit. 4	● Crit. 1	○	CH or T2
SPAMI	●	●	○	○	○	Not cited
UNESCO MAB Reserve	○	○	○	○	○	Not cited
Areas of biodiversity importance						
AZE (KBA subset)	● Crit. 1,2	● Crit. 2	○	○	○	Potential/Likely
EBSA	●	●	○	○	○	Not cited
HCV area	● HCV 1	● HCV 1	● HCV 1	● HCV 3	○	Likely or CH
IBA (KBA subset)	● Crit. 1	● Crit. 2	● Crit. 4,5,6, 8	○	○	Likely or T2
IPA	● Crit. 1	● Crit. 1	○	● Crit. 3	○	Potential/Likely
KBA	●	●	●	○	○	Potential/Likely

Degree of alignment of selection criteria:

- Full alignment
- Partial alignment
- Poor alignment

Status of designation in PS6:

- T2** Designation cited in PS6 and "certainly qualifies as Tier 2 Critical Habitat"
- CH** Designation cited in PS6 and "certainly qualifies as Critical Habitat"
- Potential/Likely** Designation cited in PS6 and "may / likely to qualify as Critical Habitat"
- Not cited** Designation not cited in PS6 as Critical Habitat, but may qualify

Refer to Table 1 for full names of abbreviations, and to Appendix 4 for a description of individual designations. The complete set of criteria underlying individual designations can be referred to in the [A-Z of Biodiversity Areas](#)¹. Where the selection criteria of a designation are identified by a standard numbering system, reference is given to those criteria which are the most relevant to the Critical Habitat criterion. The 'Status' column indicates whether the designation is nominally cited within PS6 or GN6, and whether it is categorically attributed the Critical Habitat status regardless of criteria alignment.

Introduction

Critical Habitat is a concept used within the International Finance Corporation's Performance Standard 6 (IFC PS6) to identify areas of high biodiversity value which are particularly sensitive to development initiatives¹.

Critical Habitat criteria (i) to (v) are based on five high biodiversity values, reflective of a site's *vulnerability* (degree of threat) and *irreplaceability* (rarity or uniqueness). The development of the IFC PS6 criteria for Critical Habitat drew on many established conservation principles, capturing a wide range of biodiversity designations. The common objective of these designations is to identify areas of regional or global biodiversity importance².

This briefing note discusses the alignment of Critical Habitat criteria with selection criteria of 14 site-scale and 8 regional-scale designations of areas of biodiversity importance (Table 1).

The alignment between IFC-defined Critical Habitat and the other designations is scored as full, partial or poor for each of the Critical Habitat selection criteria. Results from this scoring exercise indicate whether the designation targets protection of the same biodiversity values as Critical Habitat.

The briefing note further identifies i) designations that PS6 and the associated Guidance Note 6 (GN6) make reference to, and ii) designations which are not referred to *per se*, but which are of potential relevance to Critical Habitat assessments as they are based on similar ecological and biological criteria. A number of designations are identified in PS6 as synonymous with Critical Habitat, regardless of the alignment of criteria.

Site-scale designations cited within PS6

PS6 and GN6 mention 7 designations for areas of biodiversity importance by name, and specify in what context these sites would trigger Critical Habitat (Table 2). Only World Heritage sites, Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance, HCV₃ areas, IBAs designated under criterion A₄, and protected areas under IUCN categories Ia, Ib and II will always qualify as a Critical Habitat. All other areas are likely

Table 1: Site-scale designations assessed. Refer to Appendix 4 for a description of individual designations.

Abbreviation	Full name
Protected areas	
Natural WHS	UNESCO Natural World Heritage site
Ramsar site	Wetland of International Importance
Natura 2000 (SAC)	Special Area of Conservation established under the Habitats Directive (EU only)
Natura 2000 (SPA)	Special Protection Area established under the Birds Directive (EU only)
Emerald Network site	a.k.a. Areas of Special Conservation Interest
MPA (OSPAR)	Marine protected area designated under OSPAR (Oslo/Paris) Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic
SPAMI	Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance
Areas of biodiversity importance	
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
AZE (KBA subset)	Alliance for Zero Extinction site
IBA (KBA subset)	Important Bird and Biodiversity Area
IPA	Important Plant Area
HCV Area	High Conservation Value Area
EBSA	Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas
MAB Reserve	Man and the Biosphere Reserve

to qualify as Critical Habitat, but an assessment of biodiversity values present on-site is required.

Site-scale designations not cited within PS6, but which may qualify as Critical Habitat

There are a number of site-scale designations that are not referenced in PS6 but which may trigger the Critical Habitat criteria (Table 3).

Although these designations are not referenced in PS6 and GN6, they may meet the definitions of a *Legally Protected Area* or an *Internationally Recognized Area* outlined in paragraph 20 of PS6. Paragraph 20 refers to a number of protected area designations and IUCN categories. Projects located within such areas must comply with requirements relating to Natural or Critical Habitat as outlined in paragraphs 13 through 19. In addition, paragraph 20 stipulates a management response for developers operating within these sites³.

Internationally and nationally recognized designations of biodiversity

value are also generically referred to in paragraph GN57 of the guidance note: "*In general, internationally and/or nationally recognized areas of high biodiversity value will likely qualify as critical habitat*". An on-site assessment will be required in order to determine if such areas meet the Critical Habitat criteria.

Regional-scale designations not cited within PS6

Regional-scale designations are not addressed *per se* in PS6, and have therefore not been reviewed in-depth for the purpose of this briefing-note. Due to the large extent of such designations, the biodiversity values for which regional-scale areas were selected are unlikely to be represented continuously throughout the designated area and these areas cannot therefore be deemed indicative of the presence of Critical Habitat without on-ground assessment to identify appropriate biodiversity features.

Nonetheless, these areas have been identified as encompassing important biodiversity values, which are known to

¹More information in Appendix 1: "What is Critical Habitat?"

²More information in Appendix 2: "What are areas of biodiversity importance?"

³ For more information on paragraph 20 of the IFC PS6, refer to the briefing note "Protected Areas in IFC Performance Standard 6" (Fletcher, 2014)

exist within the designated area. They should therefore be given special consideration. Individual sites within these areas of regional importance to biodiversity will possess biodiversity values which are likely to overlap with Critical Habitat criteria.

Table 4 highlights regional-scale designations which encompass biodiversity values represented in Critical Habitat criteria. In addition to the designations listed in Table 4, consideration was also given to the High Biodiversity Wilderness Areas (HBWA), Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) and Last of the Wild designations. While these areas will likely contain Critical Habitat, alignment of criteria is not apparent as the rationale for designation is based on *intactness*, rather than *vulnerability* and *irreplaceability*.

Conclusions

1. Criteria triggering *Critical Habitat* align with the criteria of many established designations of areas of biodiversity value. A review of such designations is therefore an essential first step to assessing the likelihood of occurrence of Critical Habitat.
2. PS6 cites a number of designations which are categorically identified as Critical Habitat, regardless of the alignment of underlying criteria. These are: Natural World Heritage sites, Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance, HCV₃ Areas, IBA's designated under criterion A4, and protected areas with an IUCN category of Ia, Ib, II.
3. While regional-scale designations cannot be used to identify Critical Habitat, special attention should be given to sites falling within such regions because they are more likely to possess high biodiversity values, and are therefore of conservation importance.
4. Existing designations are particularly useful for identifying Critical Habitat on the basis of criteria (i)-(iii), but of less relevance for criteria (iv) and (v). In particular criterion (v) on "areas associated with key evolutionary processes" is poorly represented among criteria underlying established site-scale designations of areas of biodiversity importance.

Table 2: How PS6 and GN6 classify designations for areas of biodiversity importance. Direct quotes are placed under quotation marks. Refer to Table 1 for the full name of abbreviations. See Appendix 3 for a compilation of paragraphs and the original text within PS6 and GN6 referring to these sites, and Appendix 4 for a description of individual designations.

Likelihood to qualify	Designation cited	Comment
"Will be treated as Critical Habitat"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHS • Ramsar sites • HCV3 • Protected areas with an IUCN category of Ia, Ib and II 	Areas under these designations are categorically identified as Critical Habitat under PS6 and GN6. The qualification is irrespective of the alignment with the criteria for designation and requires no further ground-truthing.
"Certainly qualify as Tier 2 Critical Habitat"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramsar sites designated under criteria 5 or 6 • IBAs, or any habitat meeting BirdLife International's Criterion A4 for congregations 	Areas designated under these criteria are categorically identified as Tier 2 Critical Habitat under PS6 and GN6.
"Likely qualify as Critical Habitat"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KBA • AZE • IBA 	On-site assessment needed in order to determine if these areas correspond to the Critical Habitat definition as defined in paragraph 16 of Performance Standard 6.
"May be Critical Habitat"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA • HCV1 • HCV2 	
"Are Critical Habitat in most cases"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected areas with an IUCN category of III, IV, V and VI 	

Table 3: Designations recognized by the international conservation community, but which are not cited within PS6. These may qualify as Critical Habitat as per paragraph 20 in PS6 and paragraph GN57 of the guidance note.

Protected areas
Emerald Network Sites
MPA (OSPAR)
Natura 2000 (SAC and SPA)
SPAMI
UNESCO MAB Reserve
Areas of biodiversity importance
EBSA

Table 4: Relevance of regional-scale designations to Critical Habitat designation criteria, and biodiversity values represented therein. While none of the regional-scale designations considered herein explicitly map against criteria (i) and (iii), these values are more likely be represented at the site-scale.

Selection criterion	Relevant regional-scale designation
(i) CR and EN species	<i>Not explicitly included in designation criteria</i>
(ii) Endemic and/or restricted-range species	Biodiversity Hotspots Centres of Plant Diversity (CPD) Endemic Bird Areas (EBA) Global 200 Ecoregions
(iii) Migratory and/or congregatory species	<i>Not explicitly included in designation criteria</i>
(iv) Highly threatened and/or unique ecosystems	Biodiversity Hotspots Centres of Plant Diversity (CPD) Crisis Ecoregions Global 200 Ecoregions
(v) Key evolutionary processes	Centres of Plant Diversity (CPD) Global 200 Ecoregions

References

International Finance Corporation (2012) 2012 Performance standard 6: Biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of living natural resources (http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/bff0a28049a790d6b835faa8c6a8312a/PS6_English_2012.pdf?MOD=AJPERES); [accessed 1.4.15].

International Finance Corporation (2012) 2012 Guidance Note 6: Biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of living natural resources, (http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/a359a380498007e9a1b7f3336b93d75f/Updated_GN6-2012.pdf?MOD=AJPERES); [accessed 1.4.15].

Fletcher, R., Tolley, M., Jones, M., Brauner, K. (2014) Protected Areas in IFC Performance Standard 6, UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK. (Available online through the Proteus Partnership: <http://www.proteuspartners.org/resources/protected-areas-in-ifc-ps-6.pdf>)

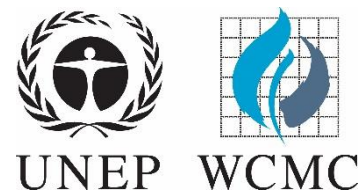
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Appendix 1: What is Critical Habitat?

Critical Habitat is a concept used within the International Finance Corporation's Performance Standard 6 (IFC PS6) on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources. It was created to identify areas of high biodiversity value which are particularly sensitive to development initiatives. Development projects within Critical Habitat are required to have a net positive impact on biodiversity. The client must meet the requirements of the Performance Standards throughout the life of the IFC investment.

The biodiversity value of an area is determined by the species, ecosystems and ecological processes present. The development of the IFC PS6 criteria for Critical Habitat drew on many established conservation principles, including those of vulnerability and irreplaceability. Critical Habitat is based on five high biodiversity values, represented in criteria (i) to (v) (Box 1). IFC's Guidance Note 6 (GN6) (which relates to PS6) provides support for the interpretation of the concept and information on individual criteria (Box 2). A set of numerical thresholds form the basis of a tiered approach to identify gradients of Critical Habitat. Thresholds are included within Criteria 1 through 3 and allow an area to be assigned to a Tier 1 or Tier 2 Critical Habitat designation.

Box 1: Definition and selection criteria for Critical Habitat (PS6, paragraph 16)

"Critical habitats are areas with high biodiversity value, including:

- (i) habitat of significant importance to Critically Endangered and/or Endangered species;
- (ii) habitat of significant importance to endemic and/or restricted-range species;
- (iii) habitat supporting globally significant concentrations of migratory species and/or congregatory species;
- (iv) highly threatened and/or unique ecosystems; and/or
- (v) areas associated with key evolutionary processes"

Guidance for each criterion is provided in GN6, paragraphs GN71 to GN97.

Box 2: Supporting paragraphs on the designation of Critical Habitat

GN6, paragraph GN55: "Critical habitats are areas of high biodiversity value, that **may include at least one or more of the five values** specified in paragraph 16 of Performance Standard 6 and/or other recognized high biodiversity values. For ease of reference, these values are referred to as critical habitat criteria (...)"

GN6, paragraph GN56: "The determination of critical habitat however is not necessarily limited to these criteria. **Other high biodiversity values might also support a critical habitat designation.** "

Appendix 2: What are areas of biodiversity importance?

Areas of biodiversity importance are those which have been identified on the basis of agreed and standardised selection criteria. The application of such criteria is an effective way of identifying areas of regional or global biodiversity importance. This ensures that the values targeted by a particular designation are consistently represented throughout the global network of sites. The selection criteria reflect the values or qualities that an area should possess, in order for it to be considered regionally or globally important for biodiversity.

Two types of areas of regional and global biodiversity importance are commonly distinguished: Protected areas designated under international or regional conventions or agreements (abridged: *international protected areas*), and areas identified as of global importance to biodiversity and/or a priority for biodiversity conservation (abridged: *biodiversity designations*). Criteria for international protected areas are developed under the auspices of Conventions or Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Criteria for biodiversity designations are typically developed based on systematic conservation planning techniques carried out by government bodies, recognized academic institutions or internationally-recognized NGOs.

Criteria may be more or less broadly defined. A well-defined system leaves less room for interpretation but may create challenges in terms of a lack of sufficient data for designation. The effective application of selection criteria depends on the definition of clear objectives to be achieved by the system of areas. Different conservation objectives may call for the application of different systems depending on the ecological, biological or social criteria they contain. Many of the existing systems in use have similar characteristics, and share a core set of biodiversity values.

Areas of biodiversity importance may be identified at multiple scales. Site- and regional-scale approaches differ in the spatial units among which they prioritize. Regional-scale designations are generally broad areas of land, and contribute to global scale planning of conservation efforts. They may, for instance, influence the allocation of financial resources. Due to the large extent of such areas, the biodiversity values for which they were selected are unlikely to be represented continuously throughout the designated area. Site-scale designations support the implementation of conservation actions on the ground, by identifying and prioritizing sites which may benefit from site-scale conservation.

Appendix 3: Compilation of paragraphs within PS6 and GN6 regarding Critical Habitat with nominally-cited designations for areas of biodiversity importance (Table A), and other non-referenced areas of high biodiversity value (Table B).

Table A: Paragraphs within PS6 and GN6 naming specific types of designation and highlighting their classification as Critical Habitat.

PS6 / GN6 paragraph	Text
GN6: GN35	<p>(...) HCV areas do not directly correspond with definitions in Performance Standard 6 for modified, natural and critical habitat. For convenience however, each HCV type is outlined below along with guidance on its most likely corresponding Performance Standard 6 designation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCV 1 : Critical Habitat in most cases • HCV 2: Natural habitat, and may be critical habitat if areas contain high biodiversity values as identified in paragraph 16 of Performance Standard 6 • HCV 3: Critical habitat • HCV 4-6: Priority ecosystem services as defined by paragraph 24 of PS6
GN6: GN57	<p>In general, internationally and/or nationally recognized areas of high biodiversity value will likely qualify as critical habitat; examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas that meet the criteria of the IUCN's Protected Areas Management Categories Ia, Ib and II, although areas that meet criteria for Management Categories III-VI may also qualify depending on the biodiversity values inherent to those sites. • UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites that are recognized for their Global Outstanding Value. • The majority of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), which encompass <i>inter alia</i> Important Bird Areas (IBA), Important Plant Areas (IPA) and Alliance for Zero Extinction Sites (AZE). • (...) Areas identified by the client as High Conservation Value (HCV) using internationally recognized standards, where criteria used to designate such areas is consistent with the high biodiversity values listed in paragraph 16 of PS6.
GN6 : GN89	<p>The Tier 2 sub-criteria for Criterion 3 are defined as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (...) For birds, habitat that meets BirdLife International's Criterion A4 for congregations and/or Ramsar Criteria 5 or 6 for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance.^{GN30,GN31}
GN6: GN115	<p>(...) Within the list of recognized areas of high biodiversity value provided in paragraph GN57, legally protected areas with an IUCN Management Category of Ia, Ib and II, UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites and Ramsar sites will be treated as critical habitat. Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) that correspond to the definition of critical habitat per paragraph 16 of Performance Standard 6 will also be treated as critical habitat. Areas that meet IUCN Management Categories III–VI or other types of areas that are offered some type of legal protection, restriction and/or management (e.g., forest reserves) might also qualify as critical habitat if these areas support high biodiversity values as defined in paragraph 16 of Performance Standard 6. An assessment would be required to make this determination.</p>

Table B: Paragraphs within PS6 and GN6 making reference to the relevance of other areas of biodiversity value to the designation of Critical Habitat

PS6 / GN6 paragraph	Text
GN6: GN56	<p>The determination of critical habitat however is not necessarily limited to these criteria. Other recognized high biodiversity values might also support a critical habitat designation, and the appropriateness of this decision would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Examples are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas required for the reintroduction of CR and EN species and refuge sites for these species (habitat used during periods of stress (e.g., flood, drought or fire)). • Ecosystems of known special significance to EN or CR species for climate adaptation purposes. • Concentrations of Vulnerable (VU) species in cases where there is uncertainty regarding the listing, and the actual status of the species may be EN or CR. • Areas of primary/old-growth/pristine forests and/or other areas with especially high levels of species diversity. • Landscape and ecological processes (e.g., water catchments, areas critical to erosion control, disturbance regimes (e.g., fire, flood)) required for maintaining critical habitat. • Habitat necessary for the survival of keystone species.^{GN11} • Areas of high scientific value such as those containing concentrations of species new and/or little known to science.
GN6: GN57	<p>In general, internationally and/or nationally recognized areas of high biodiversity value will likely qualify as critical habitat; examples include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (...) Areas determined to be irreplaceable or of high priority/significance based on systematic conservation planning techniques carried out at the landscape and/or regional scale by governmental bodies, recognized academic institutions and/or other relevant qualified organizations (including internationally-recognized NGOs) (...)
GN6: GN90	<p>Areas determined to be irreplaceable or of high priority/significance based on systematic conservation planning techniques carried out at the landscape and/or regional scale by governmental bodies, recognized academic institutions and/or other relevant qualified organizations (including internationally-recognized NGOs) or that are recognized as such in existing regional or national plans, such as the NBSAP⁴, would qualify as critical habitat per Criterion 4.</p>

⁴ National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAP) are the principle policy instrument for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity at the national level

Appendix 4: Brief description of site-scale designations assessed within this briefing note. For more information, including underlying criteria, refer to the [Biodiversity A-Z](#)⁵.

Abbreviation	Description
Protected areas	
Emerald Network site	Sites established as part of the Emerald Network, an ecological network launched by the Council of Europe under the Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats). Emerald Network sites are also known as Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI).
MPA (OSPAR)	Marine Protected Area designated under OSPAR (Oslo/Paris) Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic.
Natura 2000 Network (SAC and SPA)	A European network of protected sites under the European Habitats and Birds Directives, aiming to protect the most valuable and threatened European habitats and species. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are established under the Habitat Directive, and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are established under the Birds Directive.
Natural WHS	World Heritage Sites (WHS) are places on earth that are of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) to humanity and therefore, have been inscribed to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Natural World Heritage Sites are inscribed for their natural values.
Ramsar site (Wetlands of International Importance)	Wetlands protected by national governments to fulfil their obligations under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (commonly called the Ramsar Convention).
SPAMI	Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance are sites designated under the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona convention).
UNESCO MAB Reserve	A global network of sites established by countries and recognized under UNESCO's MAB Programme to promote sustainable development based on local community efforts and sound science.
Areas of biodiversity importance	
AZE (KBA subset)	Global list of sites containing the entire population of one or more species listed as endangered or critically endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
EBSA	Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas are areas in need of protection in open-ocean waters and deep-sea habitats designated under the Convention for Biological Diversity.
HCV Area	Natural areas of outstanding significance or critical importance due to their high biological, ecological, social or cultural values.
IBA (KBA subset)	Globally important sites for the conservation of bird species. They are the sites needed to ensure the survival of viable populations of most of the world's bird species. The IBA network also holds a large and representative proportion of other biodiversity. IBAs are a subset of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).
IPA	Globally important sites for the conservation of plants. An Important Plant Area (IPA) is a natural or semi-natural site exhibiting exceptional botanical richness and/or supporting an outstanding assemblage of rare, threatened and/or endemic plant species and/or vegetation of high botanic value.
KBA	Sites of particular importance for the persistence of biodiversity. They represent the most important sites for biodiversity conservation worldwide, and are identified nationally using standardised criteria.

⁵ <http://www.biodiversitya-z.org/>

Appendix 5: Brief description of regional-scale designations assessed within this briefing note. For more information, including underlying criteria, refer to the [Biodiversity A-Z](#)⁶.

Abbreviation	Description
Protected areas	
Biodiversity Hotspots	Large regions containing exceptional concentrations of plant endemism and experiencing high rates of habitat loss. 35 biodiversity hotspots have been identified, most of which occur in tropical forests.
Centres of Plant Diversity (CPD)	Areas of global botanical importance based on their high plant endemism and species richness. The designation identifies those areas in the world, which, if conserved, would safeguard the greatest number of plant species.
Crisis Ecoregions	Large-scale terrestrial regions of the world considered to be at risk. These are regions where extensive habitat conversion and limited habitat protection suggest that substantial, irreversible and irreplaceable losses of significant biodiversity and ecological function are likely without successful conservation intervention.
Endemic Bird Areas (EBA)	Critical regions of the world for the conservation of restricted-range bird species. EBAs are regions of the world that represent natural areas of bird endemism where the distributions of two or more restricted-range bird species overlap.
Global 200 Ecoregions	A set of 238 ecoregions whose conservation would achieve the goal of saving a broad diversity of the Earth's ecosystems and ecological processes.

⁶ <http://www.biodiversitya-z.org/>