

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS,
PRESIDENCY UNIVERSITY, KOLKATA
INVITES YOU TO A WEBINAR**

Expanding Perspectives on Biodiversity: Open Access Indicators and Their Applications

**DATE: 25 JULY 2025
TIME: 7:30 PM TO 9:00PM (IST)**



**SUSMITA DASGUPTA
LEAD ENVIRONMENTAL
ECONOMIST
THE WORLD BANK.**



**BRIAN BLANKESPOOR
SENIOR GEOGRAPHER
THE WORLD BANK.**

**TALK DURATION: 1 HOUR 15 MINUTES
Q&A SESSION: 15 MINUTES**

ALL ARE WELCOME!



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ABSTRACT

Biodiversity is essential for sustainable development, poverty reduction, and a healthy planet. However, we are witnessing a rapid and alarming decline in species and ecosystems. A 2019 UN report by IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) estimates that nearly one million species face extinction. In response, 188 countries adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) at COP 15 in December 2022 to guide global conservation efforts.

One major barrier to better biodiversity outcomes has been the lack of accessible, high-quality data. Without such data, it is difficult to conduct applied research, inform policy, or track conservation progress.

This seminar will present recent advances from the World Bank's Global Biodiversity Data & Analytics initiative, supported by the Global Environment Facility. Using machine learning techniques and publicly available species occurrence data from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), the project generated global occurrence maps for nearly 600,000 species—across terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems. The team also estimated extinction risks and protection gaps using these data. All datasets are open access and available via the World Bank's Development Data Hub.

This presentation will describe species occurrence data, the post-processing methods used, and how the data can be applied in policy-relevant biodiversity research. It will also show you how to access and use these open datasets in your own work leveraging the World Bank's Space to Statistics initiative, supported by the Global Data Facility.

Whether you're a researcher, policymaker, or technical expert interested in conservation, sustainability, or data science, this seminar will provide practical tools and insights for using advanced biodiversity indicators in real-world settings.



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SPEAKERS

SUSMITA DASGUPTA is a Lead Environmental Economist in the Development Research Group at the World Bank. With over 33 years of experience, her research focuses on environmental management in developing countries. She has conducted extensive analyses on pollution-related health hazards, the poverty-environment nexus, pollution control priorities, deforestation, biodiversity loss, climate change impacts, adaptation strategies, satellite-based climate monitoring, cost-effective regulations, and regulatory enforcement. Her research spans multiple countries, including Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Cuba, India, Iran, Lao PDR, Madagascar, Mexico, Tanzania, Tunisia, Vietnam, and Yemen. She has published widely on environmental and development issues. Before joining the World Bank in 1992, she taught at the American University and the State University of New York at Albany. She holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in Economics from the State University of New York at Albany (USA), an M.Sc. from the University of Calcutta (India), and a B.Sc. from Presidency College (India).

BRIAN BLANKESPOOR is a Senior Geographer in the Development Data Group at the World Bank, with over 17 years of experience. His work focuses on spatial data production, automation of large datasets, and spatial modeling for economic analysis. He has coauthored several peer-reviewed publications on environment, transportation, and economic geography. As co-chair of the World Bank's Geospatial Community of Practice, he represents the institution as Vice-Chair (elect) within the United Nations Geospatial Network. Before joining the World Bank, he held analytical roles in the private sector and at the World Wildlife Fund. He is a certified Geographic Information System Professional (GISP) and holds an M.S. in Applied Economics from Johns Hopkins University (USA), an M.S. in Geography from Oregon State University (USA), and a B.S. in Computer Science from Calvin College (USA).

