MWC26: Fairphone Calls on Competitors to Treat Biodiversity Loss As a Core Business Risk as 75% of a Smartphone's Environmental Impact Occurs Before It's Sold

- *The first of its kind 'Nature Report' from Fairphone found that 75% of a smartphone's environmental impact happens during the mining and manufacturing stages, identifying 11 global mining hotspots putting severe pressure on biodiversity.*
- *This hidden damage contributes to a crisis that has seen wildlife populations drop by nearly 70% in 50 years, and the tech industry is using outdated data (10-20 years old) to track it.*
- *The report argues that "low-carbon" doesn't mean "harmless," as manufacturing pollutes the water and soil that support more than half of the world's economy.*

Amsterdam, Netherlands, March 3rd, 2026 – The global technology industry's focus on cutting carbon emissions is masking a far deeper environmental crisis. This concludes a first-of-its-kind biodiversity assessment published today by the global leader in modular and sustainable electronics, Fairphone. The report warns that while companies race to meet net-zero targets, the production of smartphones and other "green" technologies is contributing to the destruction of ecosystems on a global scale, largely out of sight, and largely unmeasured.

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Wildlife populations have declined by nearly 70% in the past 50 years, and more than half of global GDP depends on healthy ecosystems. Yet most sustainability reporting in tech remains narrowly focused on emissions and renewable energy, while impact on biodiversity or water use are not taken into account.

Fairphone's latest report, "The impact of consumer electronics on nature and biodiversity" sets out to expose that gap. Using the Science Based Targets Network (SBTN) framework and expanding it with Fairphone's own life-cycle assessment data and supply-chain research, the company mapped how smartphone manufacturing and mineral extraction impact nature, from water pollution and soil degradation to biodiversity loss in mining regions.

> "The industry has been optimising for carbon while ignoring the systems that actually keep the planet alive," said Monique Lempers, Chief Impact Officer at Fairphone. "This work shows that even products branded as 'green' can be destructive to nature if we don't look beyond emissions. By measuring impact more holistically, we can solve climate challenges while protecting nature at the same time." Lempers added: "This report is a first but crucial step in understanding the real impact that tech manufacturers make during the production process".

A hidden cost of 'green' technology

The assessment challenges a core assumption of modern sustainability: that lower carbon automatically means lower environmental harm.

The report confirms that around 75% of a smartphone's total environmental impact occurs before it reaches consumers - during both the mining and manufacturing stages. Fairphone found that mineral extraction and processing pose the greatest risk to local ecosystems and biodiversity across a smartphone's lifecycle, driven by pollution, water use and changes in landscapes and water basins, as well as directly impacting biodiversity and conservation efforts. Rather than grouping mining activities into broad, generic categories, Fairphone developed a detailed methodology covering 24 priority minerals, allowing the company to trace biodiversity risks far deeper into the supply chain than is standard practice.

This approach identified 11 global mining hotspots where biodiversity faces severe pressure from the materials essential to modern electronics, solar panels and EV's, including gold, tin, cobalt, nickel and copper.

The hotspots are:

- Brazil (Minas Gerais): Gold, Iron
- China (Ningxia): Magnesium

- Guinea (Bauxite Belt): Aluminium
- India (Karnataka): Iron
- Indonesia (Maluku, Sulawesi, Bangka Belitung Islands): Cobalt, Nickel, Tin
- Myanmar (Wa State): Tin
- Peru (Ancash, San Rafael): Copper, Tin
- Philippines (Palawan Island): Nickel

Manufacturing itself also carries a heavy footprint, with water pollution and soil contamination emerging as critical but underreported risks. These may negatively impact local ecosystems and endangered species.

Data failure meets regulatory pressure

The findings come as governments and investors begin demanding disclosures on nature-related risk, through frameworks such as CSRD. Yet Fairphone's research suggests the industry is ill-prepared: critical data is missing and much of the publicly available biodiversity data is 10 to 20 years old, making it unfit for decision-making in fast-moving global supply chains. Fairphone argues that without a step-change in how impact is assessed, nature loss will remain invisible in corporate reporting, even as regulatory pressure intensifies.

> "This isn't about perfection," said Lempers. "It's about honesty. If we don't understand where the damage is happening, we can't begin to fix it."

A blueprint for what comes next

By publishing the assessment and its methodology in full, Fairphone is calling on the wider tech industry to move beyond climate-only strategies and treat biodiversity loss as a core business risk, not a secondary issue. The company says it will now work with suppliers and partners to develop prevention, mitigation and remediation efforts in high-risk regions, while urging other electronics manufacturers to adopt similar approaches.

The full report can be found here.

About Fairphone
Fairphone sets a benchmark for sustainable electronics, delivering devices made with ethical materials and responsible production. The company's mission is to transform the electronics industry by showing that design, user experience, social responsibility, and environmental care can go hand in hand.

Photos, videos, fact sheets, and other materials are available on Fairphone's press page.

For additional information and interview requests, please contact:

Weber Shandwick
fairphoneuk@webershandwick.com

Alon Brandt
alon.brandt@fairphone.com
+31 6 3458 9388