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About this document

This document presents the GoNaturePositive! Concept Note on ‘Framing a Nature-Positive Economy’. GoNaturePositive! is an EU-funded research and innovation project aimed at accelerating transformative action towards a nature-positive economy. The purpose of this concept note is to outline the central concept of Nature-Positive Economy, to enable discussion of the framing and building blocks for transitioning to a Nature-Positive Economy.

The intended audience is actors who have high **impacts and dependencies on nature**: such as businesses including small and medium sized-enterprises and nature-based enterprises; actors who **shape the economy** such as policymakers and governments, finance and investors, standards bodies; and actors who **encourage accountability** such as non-governmental organisations, researchers, education providers, citizens, and civil society groups.

This concept note is based on a year-long multi-stakeholder consultation and literature review of policy documents and academic literature (see Appendix for detailed methods). During October-December 2024, we held a global consultation process on a draft version of the concept note. Through targeted stakeholder workshops and a public consultation, over 750 individual responses were collected from stakeholders across 50 countries, resulting in over 2000 comments. These responses were coded and grouped into similar themes. Three major themes emerged from the feedback: (i) Dealing with trade-offs between nature-negative and nature-positive; (ii) Enhancing accountability and safeguards; and (iii) Bridging Indigenous and Local Knowledge. To address these issues raised by stakeholders, we held two internal workshops – one with project consortium partners and another with members of the project’s Impact Board. The consultation has thus shaped this final version of the concept note, where the main themes raised in the stakeholder feedback are addressed in boxes throughout the concept note.

The next phase of the project aims to operationalize the NPE concept with our pilot partners in agri-food systems, built environment, forestry, tourism, and the blue economy. These pilots are working to establish a baseline on the current status of the nature-positive economy in each sector, developing a vision and roadmap for transformative change, piloting actions to address roadblocks to change and measuring progress of a nature-positive economy at different scales.

If you are interested in following pilot progress in different sectors, or learning more about the nature-positive economy, in theory, policy or practice, we invite you to explore our [wide range of resources](#) and join our [network for stakeholder engagement activities](#).



Personal statement on economic growth

The global economy is embedded within nature (Dasgupta, 2021). Science-based frameworks such as Planetary Boundaries help to determine the biophysical limits within which the economy should remain to maintain a safe operating space (Richardson et al., 2023). In a NPE, the priority of an economy is nature regeneration, human wellbeing, and prosperity for all of society. The NPE can be envisioned as a catalyst for restoring the natural system of which it is a part. The priorities are restored ecological conditions, increased human wellbeing and increased uptake of diverse values of nature in decision-making processes. Economic growth may occur in the context of industry sectors and activities that are well aligned with planetary boundaries, such as nature-based solutions and nature-based enterprises.

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We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the more than 750 respondents who generously shared their time and insights by participating in our global consultation on the Nature-Positive Economy. Their input was foundational to the development of this concept note.

We are especially thankful to the participants of the following events, whose engagement, questions, and perspectives enriched our thinking as well as helped test and refine key ideas. These events include the stakeholder roundtables in Dublin, Ireland (March 2024); the EU Commission and GoNP! Dialogue Workshop in Brussels, Belgium (September 2024); the European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns in Aalborg, Denmark (October 2024); the IUCN Regional Conservation Forum for Europe, North and Central Asia in Bruges, Belgium (October 2024) and the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Cali, Colombia (December 2024).

Our sincere thanks go to the GoNP! consortium partners, whose ongoing collaboration and rich discussions helped shape the overall concept and direction of this work. We also appreciate the members of the Impact Board, whose constructive feedback strengthened both the analysis and presentation of our findings.

We are especially grateful to the [Felicidad Collective](#), namely Pilar Franco Borrell, Mora Pardo, Marta López Fernández and Pollyana Durbin, for their creative and thoughtful design of all the figures and illustrations, which brought style and visual coherence to the concept note and communications.

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All photos courtesy of GoNaturePositive! project partners.



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List of abbreviations

ACT-D	Assess, Commit, Transform and Disclose framework by Capitals Coalition and partners
AR3T	Action Framework of Avoid, Reduce, Regenerate, Restore and Transform by SBTN
BBOP	Business and Biodiversity Offset Programme
CAP	European Union Common Agricultural Policy
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
DPSIR	Drivers, Pressures, State, Impacts and Response framework
CSRD	European Union Directive on Corporate Sustainability Reporting
GoNP!	GoNaturePositive! project
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
IPLC	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
MCH	Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy
LEAP	Locate, Evaluate, Assess, and Prepare approach by TNFD
NbE	Nature-based Enterprises
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NP	Nature Positive
NPI	Nature Positive Initiative
NPE	Nature-Positive Economy



OECM	Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
SBTN	Science-Based Targets Network
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFDR	European Union Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
TNFD	Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures



Glossary

Absolute net outcome

As applied to biodiversity, an overall outcome in which the state of the targeted biodiversity is measured relative to a fixed point in the past, or a fixed former state (Maron et al., 2025).

Biodiversity offset

Measurable conservation outcomes to compensate for residual biodiversity losses with equivalent gains (BBOP, 2012b).

Full recovery of nature

Recovery of all ecosystems as outlined in the targets under the CBD's [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (CBD/COP/DEC/15/4).

Human rights-based approach

A human rights-based approach involves supporting individual and collective rightsholders in claiming and exercising their rights, and at the same time, working to strengthen actions by governments and others (known as duty-bearers) to respect, protect and fulfil rights (Newing et al., 2024).

Increase in nature

Targeted conservation outcomes, such as desired species populations or minimum ecosystem extents that are set in absolute terms, relative to a static baseline (Simmonds et al., 2020, 2022).

Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy

A conceptual framework for mitigating and compensating the biodiversity impacts of developments (Avoid, Minimize, Restore, and Offset toward a target such as “no net loss” of biodiversity) within a broader framing encompassing all conservation actions (Milner-Gulland et al., 2021).

Nature

Nature refers to the natural world with an emphasis on its living components (IPBES, 2019).

Nature-based Enterprise

An umbrella term used to describe businesses driven by a mission to work with and for nature. These are businesses where nature retention and/or restoration is a core element of their product or service offering (EU Commission, 2022b; Kooijman et al., 2021).

Nature-based Solutions

Actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human wellbeing, ecosystem services and resilience and biodiversity benefits (UNEA/EA.5/Res.5).

Nature Negative

Activities that could potentially have a negative or harmful effect on nature (Deutz et al. 2020). Nature-negative finance flows are often tracked in sectors such as agriculture, fossil fuels, fisheries, and forestry (Selomane et al., 2025; UNEP, 2023).



Nature Positive	A global societal goal defined as ‘Halt and Reverse Nature Loss by 2030 on a 2020 baseline, and achieve full recovery by 2050’. To put this more simply, it means ensuring more nature in the world in 2030 than in 2020 and continued recovery after that (NPI, 2023).
Nature-Positive Economy	An economy is a Nature-Positive Economy when that the net result of all economic activities combined leads to an absolute increase in nature, to the point of full recovery, and prosperity for all society.
Net outcomes approach	Biodiversity losses and gains are quantified in an integrated framework that permits transparency as to whether biodiversity goals are being achieved. This requires that any biodiversity losses are not ecologically irreplaceable, that they are socially acceptable and that they are more than fully compensated for, so that overall, nature is retained or restored in net terms (Bull et al., 2019).
Relative net outcome	As applied to biodiversity, an overall outcome in which the state of the targeted biodiversity is measured relative to a counterfactual scenario usually one in which neither the impact nor the offset occurred (Maron et al., 2025).
Safeguards	Systems an organisation may put in place to prevent negative environmental or social impacts occurring as a consequence of its work. e.g., International Finance Corporation’s Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability ; World Bank’s Environmental and Social Safeguard Policies .



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1. Introduction

A Nature-Positive Economy (NPE) aims for full nature recovery while ensuring prosperity for all of society. A NPE reduces nature-related financial, economic and supply risks for sectors most exposed to vulnerable value chains. This contributes to national security and system resilience as it strengthens the ability of the economy to withstand financial, environmental or other shocks (OECD, 2020). It also enables competitiveness by creating new and inclusive jobs in the field of nature recovery, supports the transition of existing industries to more sustainable business models and helps mitigate the nature crisis, which undermines food security, economic prosperity, and puts vulnerable communities at risk.

The NPE builds on the Nature Positive (NP) concept that has been used by businesses, governments, and non-governmental organisations to indicate their biodiversity commitments and alignment with global societal and environmental goals. Political leaders from 94 countries signed a Leaders Pledge for Nature, committing to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. More than 360 non-state actors, including the Nature Positive Initiative with its 27 core member organisations and over a hundred forum members, have called for action towards a Global Goal for Nature to secure a nature-positive world by 2030.

Nature Positive actions aim to protect, restore and use nature in a sustainable¹ way, with the aim of conserving biodiversity.

¹ We understand sustainability in reference to the Brundtland (1987) definition of sustainability as: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987. Our Common Future. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Such actions are essential not only for reversing biodiversity loss but also for achieving climate goals outlined in the Paris Agreement. This integrated approach is vital for addressing the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. This also contributes to the delivery of global goals such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), and those defined by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). These actions support several SDGs². The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, agreed upon by almost all nation states worldwide, calls for halting and reversing biodiversity loss from as soon as 2030, such that by 2050 “biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used”. NP actions contribute to the implementation of several GBF targets.³

Over half of the world’s total GDP is dependent on nature, with all companies and industries dependent on ecosystem services to some degree (Finance for Biodiversity Foundation, 2024; WEF & PwC, 2020).

Despite this, the value of nature is not fully recognised and incorporated into current dominant economic models and policy-making approaches. The World Benchmarking Alliance points out that amongst 400 influential global companies, approximately 5% assessed the impact of their operations on nature and biodiversity, and <1% measured their dependencies on nature and ecosystem services (WBA, 2024).

² While the NPE supports all SDGs, certain goals that are particularly relevant to a NPE include: SDG2: Zero hunger, SDG12: Responsible consumption and production; SDG13: Climate action; SDG14: Life below water; SDG15: Life on land.

³ While the NPE supports all GBF targets, certain targets that are particularly relevant to a NPE include T11: Restore, Maintain and Enhance Nature’s Contributions to People; 14: Integrate Biodiversity in Decision-Making at Every Level; T15: Businesses Assess, Disclose and Reduce Biodiversity-Related Risks and Negative Impacts; T18: Reduce Harmful Incentives and Scale Up Positive Incentives for Biodiversity; T19: Mobilise \$200 Billion per Year for Biodiversity.



Mainstream economic activities continue to drive negative impacts on nature; particularly through drivers of biodiversity loss such as land and sea use change, direct exploitation of natural features, climate change, pollution, and invasive species (IPBES, 2019). This has resulted in significant rates of biodiversity loss; since 1970, there has been an average decline of 73% in monitored wildlife populations (WWF, 2024). For instance, while agriculture is essential for feeding the population and plays a vital role in national economies, the degradation of land and marine ecosystems undermines the wellbeing of 3.2 billion people and costs about 10 percent of the annual global gross product in loss of species and ecosystems services (FAO, 2023). The erosion of natural capital generates significant and long-term risks to society, the economy and financial sector. Biodiversity loss and environmental degradation are at a level where they create material risks for the economy and financial sector, slowing economic growth. The material risks will increase over time with the potential for crossing tipping points without transformation of the way the economy operates (Avery et al., 2024).

The current global economy has contributed to significant nature degradation but a transformation towards an economy that restores nature, a nature-positive economy, would also generate substantial economic and societal benefits. For example, a NPE highlights the importance of healthy soils for agricultural production to be competitive and secure food production.

A Nature-Positive Economy must also be inclusive with prosperity for all, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, who are key stewards of traditional knowledge and biodiversity, form an integral part of the decision-making process and benefit from the sustainable use of natural resources.

Despite the concept of NP being well defined (Section 2), there remains a lack of clarity on concrete pathways towards operationalising NP and realising a Nature-Positive Economy. There is a plethora of initiatives around NP from organizations and countries, including the Nature Positive Initiative, [National NP Pathways led by WWF](#), [Finance for NP by UNEP-FI](#), the [Global Nature Positive Summit 2024](#) hosted by Australia, [Transition Strategies towards the NPE](#) led by Japan and more. As seen with the evolution of definitions on Nature-based Solutions with different framings and emphasises that generated confusion in policy discussions (Seddon et al., 2021), a clear, consensus-based definition of a Nature-Positive Economy is needed for the global community to focus on operationalisation for nature recovery.

The GoNaturePositive! (GoNP!) project supports efforts to provide clarity and direction on framing and operationalising the NPE using a stakeholder engagement approach and building on the existing evidence base. The project seeks to demonstrate how nature-based solutions (NbS)⁴ can generate economic opportunities while simultaneously enhancing biodiversity, mitigating climate change, and delivering essential ecosystem services.

By exploring the role of nature-based enterprises (NbE) – organisations that generate revenue through activities that restore, conserve, or manage nature sustainably (Kooijman et al., 2021) – the GoNP! project aims to identify scalable business models that align economic development with ecological health.

⁴ The UNEA Resolution on nature-based solutions defines NbS as “actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human wellbeing, ecosystem services and resilience and biodiversity benefits” (UNEA/EA.5/Res.5).



The purpose of this concept note is twofold:

1. to provide conceptual clarity and a framework to guide the GoNP! project’s next phase of work that involves testing the operationalisation of this concept on the ground with our 6 pilot partners; and
2. to advance wider knowledge on the concept of a nature-positive economy, contributing to research and policy discourse, business and citizen initiatives working for transformative change towards nature-positive economic models, policies and business practices.

Methodology and data collection

This concept note summarises the findings of an extensive multi-stakeholder consultation and a literature review of relevant policy documents and academic literature (see Figure 1 and Appendix). The overarching questions are:

- a. What is the “Nature-Positive Economy”? What are the key elements of a NPE?
- b. How can the NPE be operationalized?

- c. What is the positioning of Nature-based Solutions and Nature-based Enterprises within the Nature-Positive Economy?

This concept note is structured to guide readers through a comprehensive exploration of the Nature-Positive Economy. **Section 2** refers to the “Nature Positive” goal and how nature is understood. **Section 3** introduces the NPE concept, explains its definition, places it within the policy landscape and in relation to other economic concepts including the Net-Zero economy and bioeconomy. **Section 4** examines the key elements of a NPE: operationalisation, actors, scales, sectors, and social wellbeing. This is followed by **Section 5**, which discusses a framework for measuring progress toward nature-positive outcomes. Finally, **Section 6** concludes with next steps for GoNaturePositive! including pilot projects, stakeholder engagement, and the iterative co-design of NPE metrics and operational pathways. Together, these sections lay an evidence-based roadmap, from definition and framing to measurement and implementation, to support the transition toward an economy that gives more to nature and society than it takes.

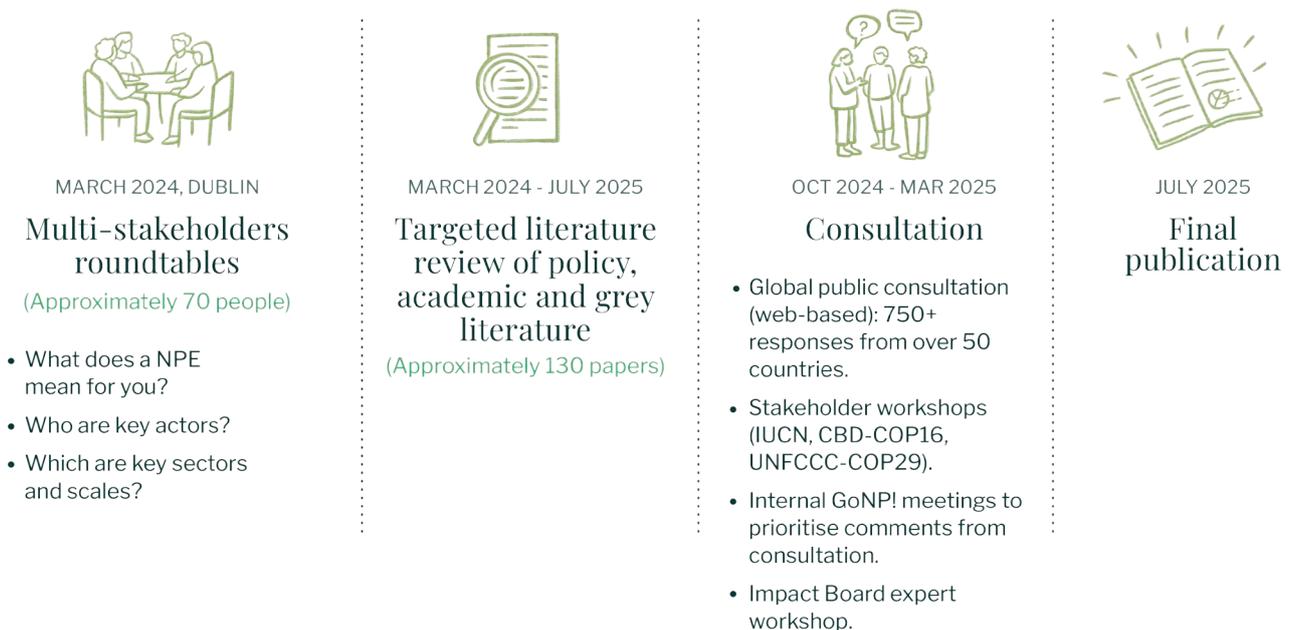


Figure 1. Methods applied in the development of this Concept Note.



Box 1. Stakeholders and their potential interests in the Nature-Positive Economy.
Source: Multi-stakeholder roundtables in Dublin (2024) and literature review.

As a whole-of-society approach is needed for reaching our global biodiversity goals, all stakeholders have a role to play in operationalising the Nature-Positive Economy.

Stakeholder	Interest in the Nature-Positive Economy
Policymakers and governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create an enabling policy environment that will support stakeholders in their nature-positive journey. Adapt policies, regulations and guidance to align with systemic change and a credible transition to a NPE, focusing on innovative governance instruments and collaborative efforts.• Create opportunities on economic potential and economic risk reduction of NPE.• Create opportunities to emphasise social wellbeing and ecological resilience of the NPE (e.g., NbS as a bridge for vulnerable groups to engage with society as well as encourage social justice).
Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase their understanding and engagement with NP, avoid nature-negative practices and manage physical/ transition risks.• Develop business models that operate within planetary boundaries and generate positive impacts for employees, communities and the natural environment within which businesses operate.• Improve compliance with regulation on reporting, traceability and due diligence.• Identify opportunities for new markets, products and services in the NPE.
Nature-based enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding opportunities to increase investments in NbE and recognise their role in a NPE.• To identify potential market opportunities and substantiate new value propositions.

**Finance and investment organisations**

- Integrate climate and environmental risks into mandates and operations.
- Strengthen ability of investors to take into account biodiversity risk & impact in investment decisions and make decisions based on evidence of corporate actions and performance.
- Attract private sector investment.

Environmental organisations

- Co-create, communicate and advocate for the NPE (e.g., linked to achieving their organisational goals such as nature that is protected, conserved or used sustainably).
- Monitor NP commitments and encourage accountability, paying attention to poor interpretation of NP.

Citizens and communities

- For current and future generations to live in a healthy environment.
- Engage in participatory co-creation initiatives on inclusive, equitable approaches to the NPE.

Researchers

- Provide input and guidance on Nature Positive commitments that are evidence-based, scientifically robust and sound.

Standards bodies

- Provide frameworks for businesses to disclose and manage nature impacts to align business practices with environmental standards.





2. What is Nature Positive?

Nature Positive is a global and societal goal to restore nature in the world over a specified timeframe (Figure 2). It is framed around restoring nature for its intrinsic values, as well as to benefit

human and planetary wellbeing. While there are several definitions of Nature Positive (zu Ermgassen et al., 2022), one leading definition is from the Nature Positive Initiative:

“Halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 on a 2020 baseline, and achieve full recovery by 2050”.

Delivering the Nature Positive goal requires measurable net-positive biodiversity outcomes through the improvement in the abundance, diversity, integrity and resilience of species, ecosystems, and natural processes (Locke et al., 2021).

The ‘net’ is an important aspect: it implies acceptance of at least some negative impacts on nature from human activities following mitigation, so long as the overall outcome is an increase and restoration of nature (Maron et al., 2023) (see Box 3).

Global goal for nature

Nature-Positive by 2030

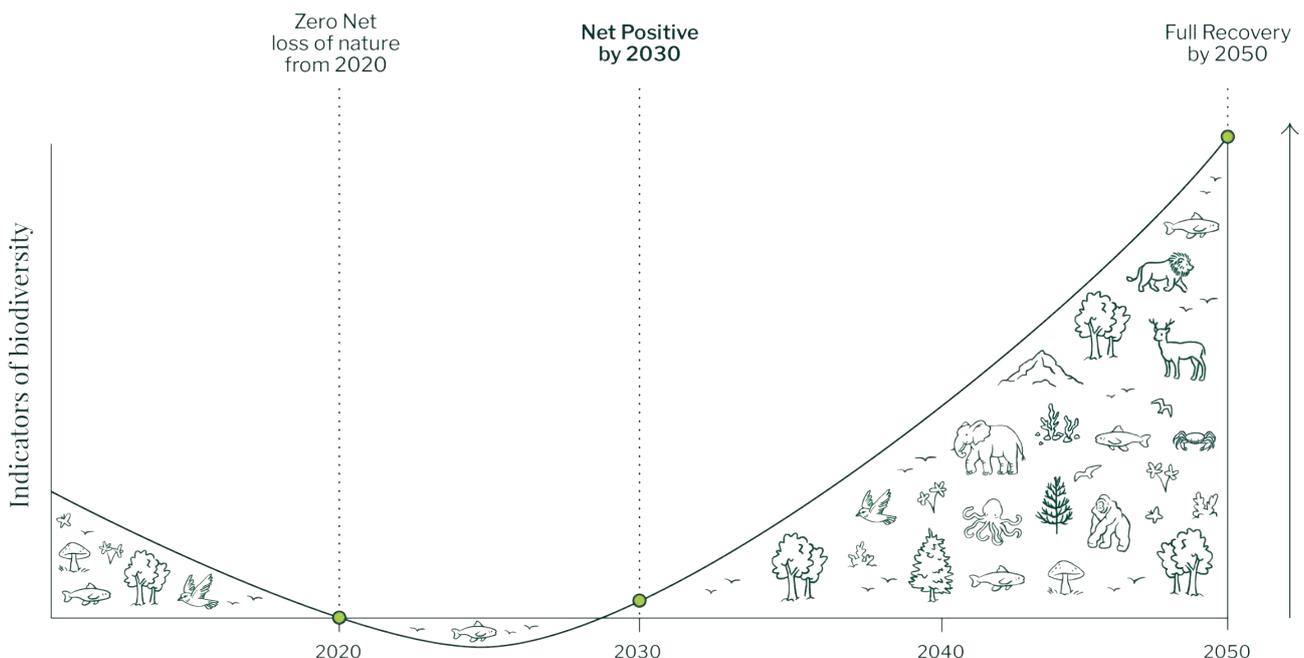


Figure 2. Nature Positive by 2030 with a baseline of 2020, and full recovery by 2050.
Source: GoNPI, based on the [Nature Positive Initiative](#).



Crucially, though progress towards Nature Positive might be measured in terms of biodiversity change, nature recovery should be seen to go beyond increases in biodiversity, and require positive outcomes in relation to a broader set of values placed on nature. This includes abiotic components of ecosystems e.g. water resources and carbon stocks as well as considering people as part of nature, and nature’s contributions to people. Several

organizations are developing principles for ensuring the integrity of Nature Positive, such as by the EU Business and Biodiversity Platform that identified 10 core principles for business and financial institutions to comply with (EU Business and Biodiversity Platform, 2022). One example from academic research is Figure 3 that outlines core elements for an effective NP strategy (Booth et al., 2024; Lambertini et al., 2025; White et al., 2024) (Figure 3).

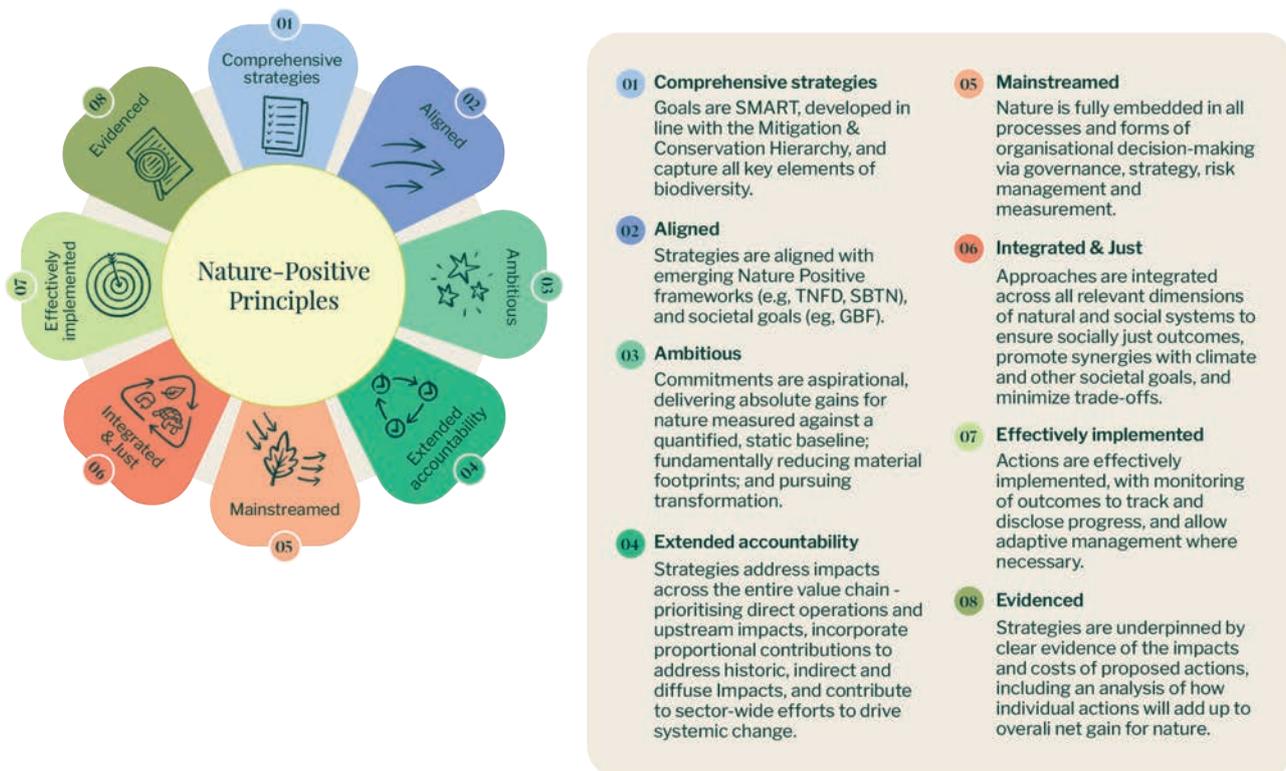


Figure 3. Nature Positive Principles. Source: GoNP! based on Booth et al. (2024); White et al. (2024)



Box 2. How do we understand nature in the context of a Nature-Positive Economy?

Nature refers to the natural world with an emphasis on its living components (IPBES, 2019). Within the context of western science, it includes categories such as biodiversity, ecosystems (both structure and functioning), evolution, the biosphere, humankind's shared evolutionary heritage, and biocultural diversity. In wider interpretations of nature under 'western science', it also means everything including humans such as physics under the fundamental laws of nature. Within the context of other knowledge systems, it includes categories such as Mother Earth and systems of life, and it is often viewed as inextricably linked to humans, not as a separate entity (e.g., Mother Earth). Nature also includes nature's contributions to people (IPBES, 2022).

In a Nature-Positive Economy, "nature" is recognized as the foundation underpinning the economy and human wellbeing, encompassing more than just biodiversity in the form of species and habitats. According to guidance by the IUCN, nature can be categorised into atmosphere, land, freshwater and marine ecosystems, whereby biodiversity cross-cuts all ecosystems (Baggaley et al., 2023). Nature also includes the dynamic ecological systems and processes - such as soil formation, water purification, and air quality regulation - that sustain life on Earth. Nature is viewed as an interconnected web of life and ecological functions that provide the potential for essential services critical to both environmental health and socio-economic resilience.

Relational values of nature capture the importance of meaningful relationships between people and nature such as reciprocity and care (Pascual et al., 2023). Society is a part of nature and people are dependent on nature for survival, wellbeing, and culture. Humans can be seen as 'stewards' of the environment, whereby people are intrinsically motivated with a sense of perceived duty and responsibility of caring for nature (Johnston, 2022; West et al., 2018). Humans can also perceive nature as a physical, mental, and spiritual part of themselves, emphasising broad values of oneness, kinship and interdependence (Pascual et al., 2023). As humans are part of nature, restoring nature also supports nature's contributions to people and improvements to human wellbeing such as zero hunger, good health, clean water, and more.

A Nature-Positive Economy seeks to protect and enhance the quality and/or quantity of natural systems with economic activities that contribute to the planet's ecological integrity.





3. What is the Nature-Positive Economy?

3.1 Defining the Nature-Positive Economy

An economy can be thought of as a system where the resources of a region are linked to the production, consumption, and exchange of goods and services. This is the same for the NPE, with the added condition that the net impact of

the system is to increase the quality and/or quantity of nature towards a healthy environment.

The Nature-Positive Economy can be defined as⁵:

“An economy is a Nature-Positive Economy when the net result of all economic activities combined leads to an absolute increase in nature, to the point of full recovery and prosperity for all of society”.

Operationalising the Nature-Positive Economy means that all **actors** [4.2] take actions across **scales** [4.3] and **sectors** [4.4], grounded in **social wellbeing** and equity [4.5]. **Actions** consist of reducing nature-negative impacts, increasing nature-positive actions, and enacting transformative change [4.1].

Full recovery means that nature recovers so that thriving ecosystems continue to support future generations. To ensure this all ecosystems must recover, as outlined by the targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD/COP/DEC/15/4).

The Nature-Positive Economy is envisioned as an ongoing process towards the goal of halting and reversing nature loss by 2030

and full recovery by 2050. The aim of a NPE is a global economy that maintains a neutral ongoing impact on a “fully recovered” natural world.

⁵ Other definitions of the Nature-Positive Economy include:

“A nature-positive economy is one in which businesses, governments and others, take action at scale to reduce and remove the drivers and pressures fuelling the degradation of nature, and work to actively improve the state of nature and the ecosystem services it provides” (CISL, 2024).

“Identify, assess and improve the impact on people and environment resulting from their activities, products and services. For the banks to continuously increase positive impact while reducing negative impact on people and environment, they need to incorporate assessment of impacts on all three dimensions of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) into business decision-making at strategic, portfolio and transaction levels.” (UNEP FI, 2021).

“The overarching goal of a nature-positive economy is for the sum total of all economic actors’ activities to deliver net improvements in nature” (zu Ermgassen et al., 2022).

“An economy that is regenerative, collaborative and where growth is only valued where it contributes to social progress and environmental protection” (UNEP, 2021).



The NPE represents a transitional phase, delivering net gains for nature until a certain point of ecological recovery, such as achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework targets.

Beyond this point, the economy would

achieve a stable state of living in harmony with nature, operating within planetary boundaries. Some nature-negative economic activities may still occur during this transition period as long as the combined outcome overall is nature positive (Box 1) (Figure 4).

Progression of economic activities towards a Nature-Positive Economy

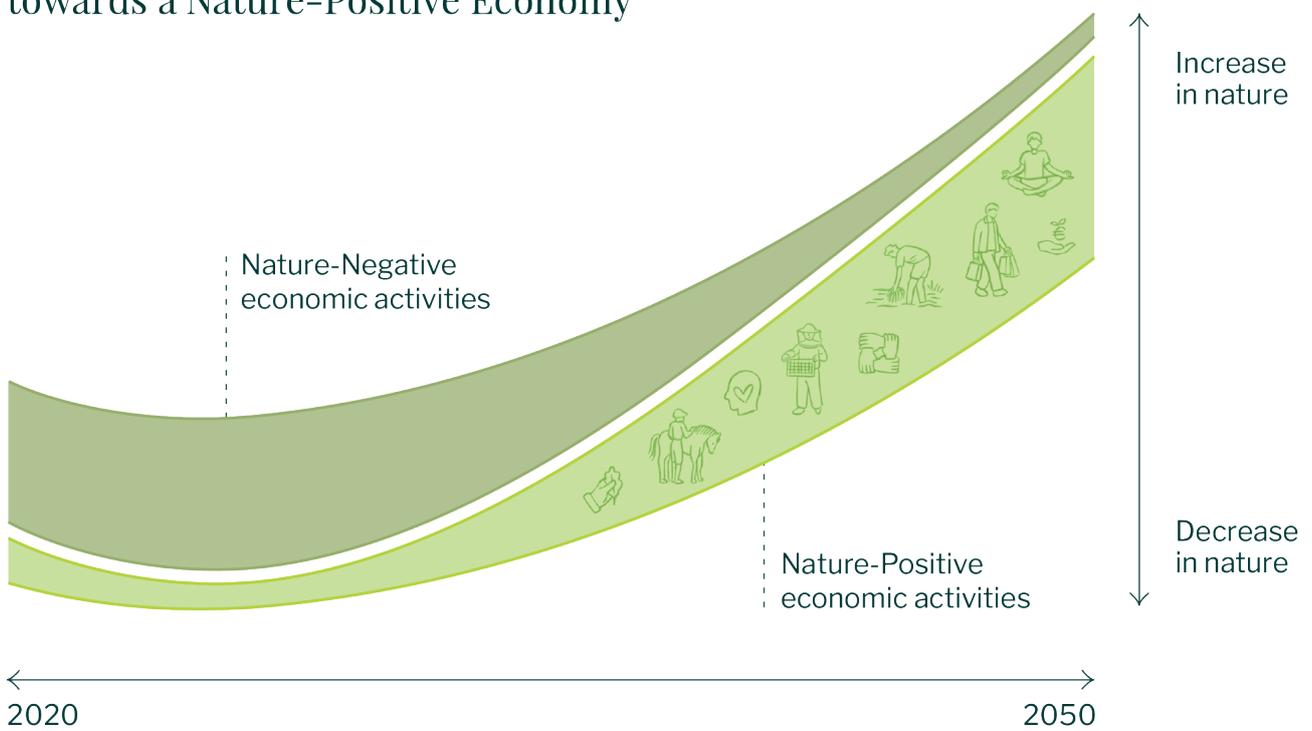


Figure 4. A Nature-Positive Economy means that the net result of all economic activities combined lead to an absolute increase in nature, to the point of full recovery and prosperity for all society. The economy undergoes a transition away from nature-negative activities towards more nature-positive activities. Source: GoNP!

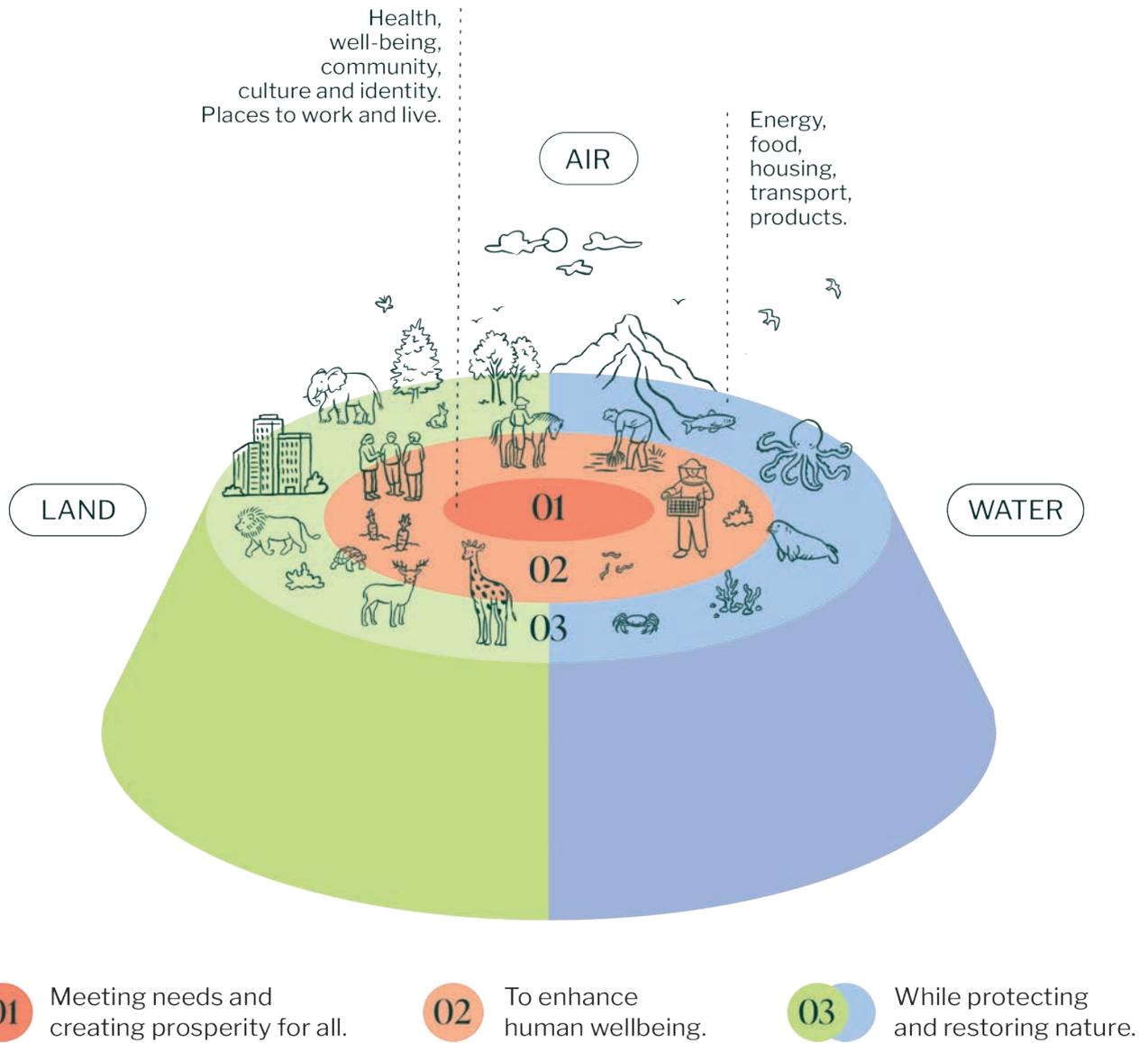


Figure 5. A Nature-Positive Economy. Source: GoNPI, based on [UNEP \(2021\)](#).

Strategies for transformative change include transforming dominant economic paradigms to prioritize nature and social equity (IPBES, 2024c). A NPE is embedded within human society - the social capital of norms, rules, trust and relations that build social cohesion and stable societies - but both economic and social capital cannot

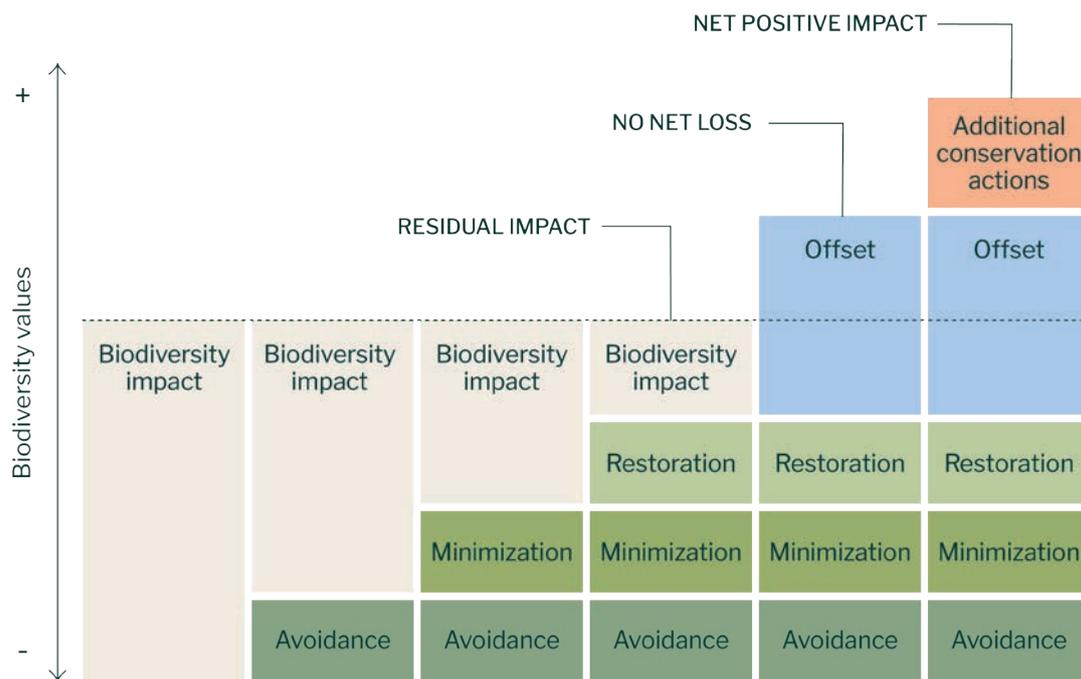
grow beyond the intrinsic limitations of the biosphere (Figure 5). A NPE is grounded in the concept of strong sustainability where different types of capital (ecological, social, economic) are not substitutable and should be maintained independently (Goodland & Daly, 1996).



Box 3. What is a net outcomes approach?

A net outcomes approach quantifies biodiversity losses and gains in an integrated framework, such as in No Net Loss or Net Gain policies that are often used in the mitigation hierarchy (Bull et al., 2019). This permits transparency as to whether biodiversity goals are being met (see figure below on mitigation hierarchy from Aima et al., 2015).

The mitigation hierarchy for managing biodiversity risk



Net outcomes must be rooted in strong sustainability, where damage to ecologically irreplaceable or highly vulnerable nature should be avoided and that overall, nature is retained or restored in net terms (BBOP, 2012a; Koh et al., 2019). A net outcomes approach is consistent with guidance by the Nature Positive Initiative, which has obtained consensus from its coalition of conservation, private sector, academic, and civil society members (Locke et al., 2021).

Net outcomes acknowledge the complexity of economic systems, where not all activities can be immediately or fully nature positive. Some components of nature will continue to be reduced to allow for necessary improvements in human welfare locally (e.g., through food systems and infrastructure), but such losses must be balanced by equal and additional gains in local ecosystems (IUCN, 2023; Maron et al., 2021; Milner-Gulland et al., 2021). This requires inclusive methods and meaningful participation from all of society for an efficient deliberation on which aspects of nature loss are acceptable - for example through a citizens' assembly. This is especially important for actors such as farmers, indigenous peoples and local communities (Turnhout, 2018) (see Section 4.5).

Moreover, a net outcomes approach also requires actors to specify metrics for monitoring biodiversity losses and gains, which is context dependent as different metrics suit different applications (such as economic sector or geographic region) and scales (see Section 5).



3.2 Nature-Positive Economy in relation to the policy landscape

The NPE can be conceptualised into ecological, social, economic, and policy dimensions, with characteristics to guide the operationalisation of each dimension (Figure 6). The NPE contributes to the broader sustainability agenda as it has

synergies with other societal goals including the SDGs, GBF, and the Net Zero transition. Figure 6 notes how each dimension of the Nature-Positive Economy can help support the delivery of multiple SDGs and GBF targets.

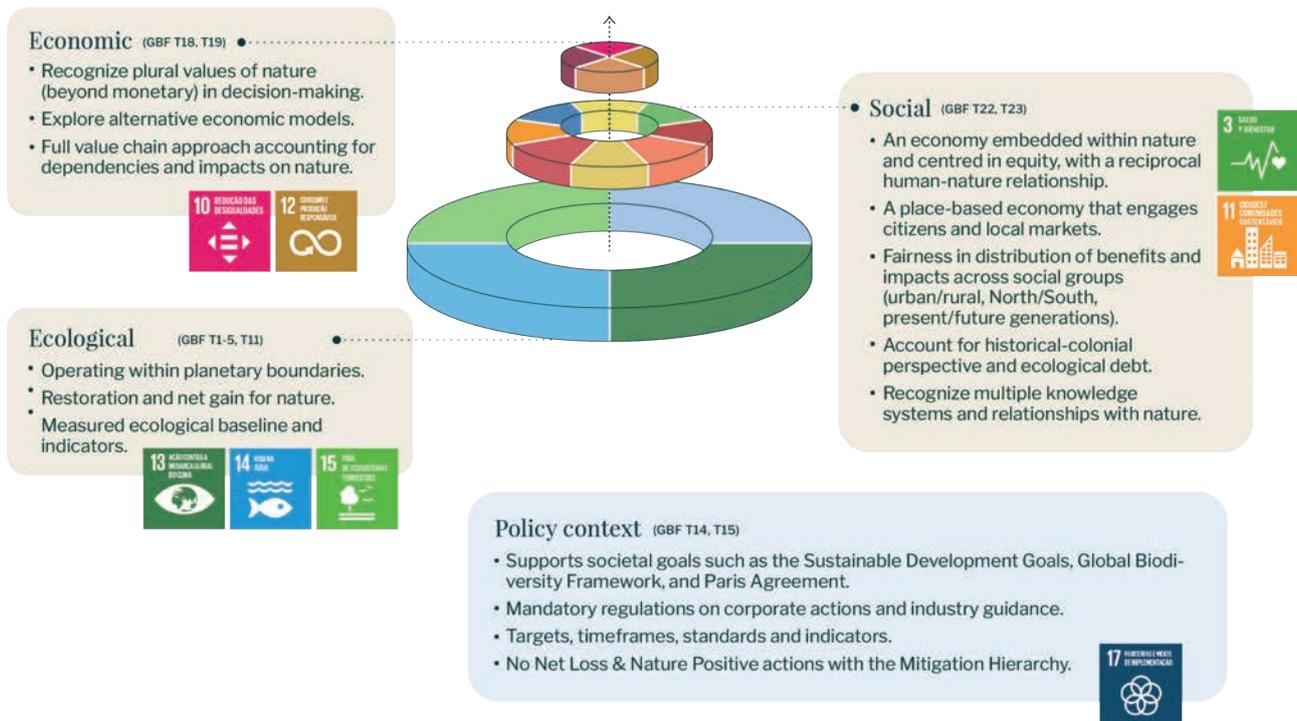


Figure 6. Characteristics of a Nature-Positive Economy based on the Dublin stakeholder roundtables.

Each dimension of the NPE supports the delivery of multiple SDGs and GBF targets.

Source: GoNPI, adapted from Azote for SRC (2016).



In an EU context, many existing policies already incorporate nature-positive elements and promote related goals (Kupilas et al., 2025). A landmark example is the Nature Restoration Regulation, the first of its kind to mandate ecosystem restoration, rather than merely protection, across an entire continent. It applies to multiple ecosystems and sets measurable, time-bound targets for restoring degraded nature. However, overall alignment with nature-positive economy principles remains inconsistent and some overarching limitations remain. For instance, many EU policy instruments still lack legally binding obligations and continue to rely on voluntary measures. At the same time, harmful subsidies persist, and funding for nature-positive action remains insufficient. Even when environmental objectives are included, competing policy priorities that do not prioritise nature-positive outcomes can undermine progress towards NPE. In addition, accountability in the private and financial sectors remains inconsistent. Corporate sustainability commitments often lack enforcement mechanisms, which can lead to gaps in transparency and meaningful action (ibid).

Recent developments in the EU, with the [Competitiveness Compass](#), [Omnibus simplification package](#), and the European Commission's proposal for the 2028–2034 EU budget (i.e., Multiannual Financial Framework, MFF) further complicate this picture. The Competitiveness Compass, introduced by the European Commission in early 2025, sets out a five-year roadmap to steer the EU towards a more resilient, sustainable, and globally competitive economy. The compass sets out an approach to translate the three necessities outlined in the Draghi report into reality. These necessities include (i) closing the innovation gap, (ii) decarbonising our economy, and (iii) reducing dependencies. In parallel, the Omnibus proposal seeks to simplify key sustainability regulations

such as the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). While the Competitiveness Compass continues to prioritise climate objectives, the limited focus on nature and broader environmental concerns raises the risk that these areas may be sidelined in exchange for short-term reductions in administrative costs or regulatory constraints.

The European Commission's proposal for the [2028–2034 MFF](#), published in July 2025, outlines a [€2 trillion budget](#) that prioritises flexibility, crisis resilience, industrial competitiveness, and security. While it includes a headline target to allocate 35% of spending to climate and environment objectives, the implications for biodiversity and nature-positive action remain uncertain, as it might lack distinct or binding earmarking for biodiversity or related environmental priorities. Key concerns also include the likely absorption of the LIFE funding programme and the removal of binding EU-wide targets for eco-schemes under the CAP, effectively scrapping previous ring-fencing for climate-friendly farming.

Moreover, it has been argued that the Nature Restoration Regulation will likely enable significant job creation arising from the large-scale restoration of habitats and species. This will stimulate the growth of nature-based enterprises across multiple fields and require a diverse workforce, with increased demand for knowledge and skills in conservation biology, environmental engineering, forestry, agroforestry, conflict resolution, and behavioural psychology. The law will also spur development of green/blue infrastructure, encouraging sustainable urban planning initiatives like green roofs, urban forests, and natural water management systems. This will create a demand for expertise in sustainable construction, water management technologies, and landscape architecture. The agricultural sector

may see a shift towards sustainable and regenerative practices such as agroecology and organic farming as well as drive the market for resilient crop varieties and innovative farming technologies. Ecosystem services markets may also expand, alongside ecotourism and sustainable recreation in restored natural areas. Restoring forests and wetlands will boost biodiversity and carbon sequestration, creating opportunities for Nature-based Solutions and other biodiversity-related finance. Such activities prompted by the Nature Restoration Regulation are supportive to the Nature-Positive Economy, which is focused on ecological recovery and social wellbeing. However, there will be economic transition costs as these new opportunities may occur in the face of job and productivity losses arising from the move away from the exploitation model of the industrial economies. This highlights the importance of a just transition and equity framing that considers recognitional, procedural, and distributional aspects (Bennett et al., 2019; C. L. McDermott et al., 2025).





3.3 Nature-Positive Economy in relation to other economic concepts

Economics is a social science discipline that continuously evolves and holds differing world views. Since classical economics were formulated in the 18th and 19th century, different schools of thought have emerged including Marxist economics, neoclassical economics, and humanistic economics in the 19th century, institutional economics in the beginning of the 20th century, neo-Keynesian economics, monetarism/neoliberalism and a market model paradigm of environmental management and pluralism in politics throughout the 20th century (Pearce & Turner, 1990).

Environmental and resource economics emerged from the 1960s onwards,

based on neo-classical economics, with the growing concern of the scale of degradation of the environment and the natural resource base due to a dominant linear model of production and consumption leading to an exponential increase of negative externalities.

During the 21st century a number of emerging economic concepts have been formulated with a basis in ecological economics, which generally emphasise the economy as a subsystem of the ecosystem with a focus upon preserving natural capital and operating within the biophysical limits of our planet. These include but are not limited to the following approaches as presented in Figure 7 and Table 1.

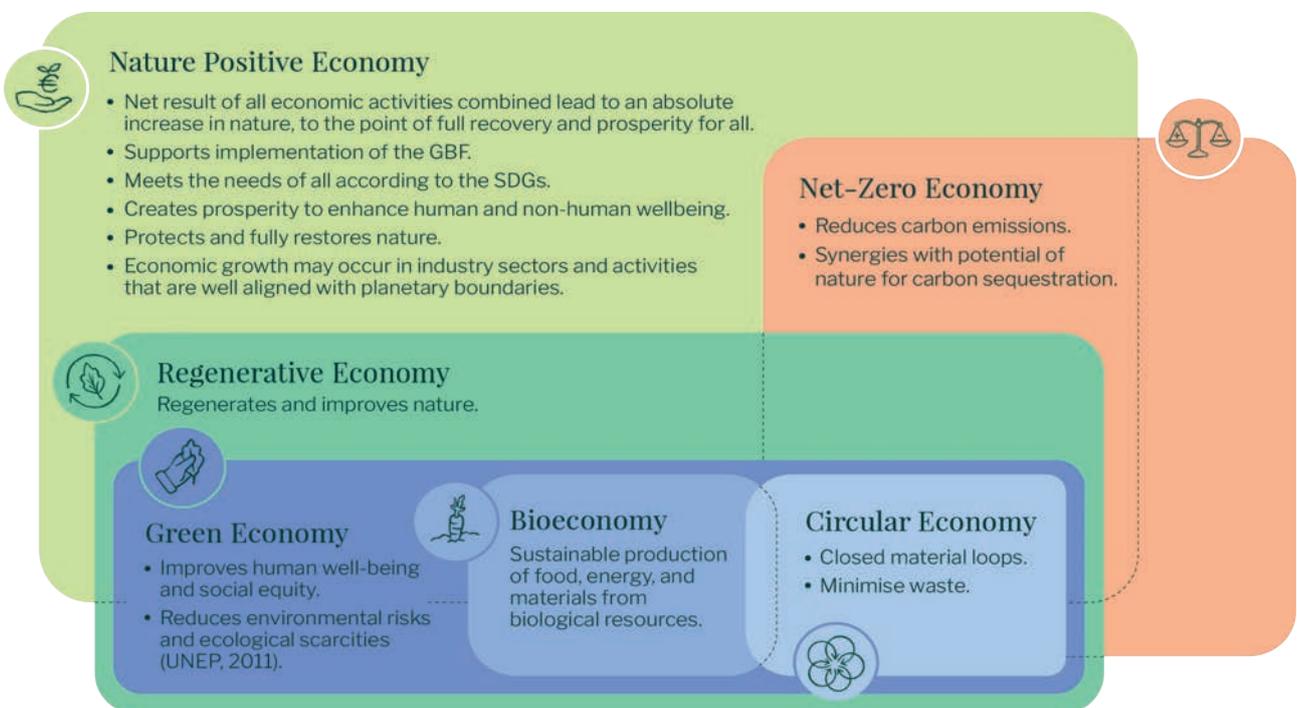


Figure 7. Relationships between the NPE and selected economic concepts.

The NPE is well aligned with many of the core ideas of the bioeconomy, circular economy, net-zero economy and green economy, but with a clear focus on biophysical limits, nature recovery, and social wellbeing.

Source: GoNPI, adapted from Bocken & Short, 2021; Ladeja Godina Košir et al., 2021.



The **Net-Zero Economy** is a response to the climate change crisis by developing an economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. Economic growth is prioritised in activities that are climate neutral with low carbon, energy- and resource efficiency. There are potential synergies with a NPE, as the transition to nature-positive economic activities can often contribute to carbon reduction as part of a managed approach.

A **Bioeconomy** based on sustainable biomass supply and demand that is able to manage healthy and resilient ecosystems is a prerequisite for a NPE. The bioeconomy takes a utilitarian view of nature and is more consistent with conventional economic approaches that put a higher value on extraction from nature within the context of economic gains, while a NPE places equal emphasis on prosperity for all of society and nature recovery.

The **Circular Economy** provides a valuable mechanism that can contribute towards a NPE through the increase in resource use efficiencies and closing the loop on waste streams. However, a Circular Economy alone is not sufficient to reach a full recovery of nature. The **Green Economy** places an emphasis on low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive aspects.

A NPE aligns well with **Doughnut Economy** principles by recognising the economy as embedded within society and the living world and where economic activity needs to be regenerative, circular and socially just. NPE is positioned as a transitional model until full nature recovery is achieved, while doughnut economics highlights a safe and just living space for humanity. NPE aligns with **Degrowth**, **Post-growth** and **Steady State Economy** concepts in the agreement that human society must find a way to operate within the ecological limits of the planet and be socially equitable. Each economic concept is discussed in further detail as follows.

Bioeconomy

The bioeconomy focuses on all sectors and associated services and investments that produce, use, process, distribute or consume biological resources, including ecosystem services (EU Commission, 2022a). The term knowledge-based bioeconomy was originally promoted by the EC since the early 2000s as an economy to ‘transform life sciences knowledge into new, sustainable, eco-efficient and competitive products’ [Cologne Paper of 2007] with two dimensions:

- i) a biotechnology innovation perspective - make economic use of the emerging new potential of using biotechnologies; and
- ii) a resource substitution perspective - a replacement of fossil-based resources by bio-based resources, both for energy and for material use (Lewandowski, 2018).

Recently, the bioeconomy concept has become embedded more explicitly into the broader concepts of sustainable development and the green economy and moves away from the supply side (technological innovations and companies) to the demand side (consumers and society at large). The G20 recently established the [10 High-Level Principles on Bioeconomy](#).

These principles include:

- A commitment to inclusion and equity, defending the rights of all persons, including Indigenous peoples and members of local communities, promoting gender equality and advancing efforts to mitigate and adapt to global climate change, in accordance with applicable multilateral climate agreements.
- Contributing to the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its resources and the just and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, subject to national laws and in accordance with



applicable international agreements and instruments.

- Promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, the efficient and circular use of biological resources, and trade for bioeconomy products and services. The principles also include market conditions, sustainable business models, and decent jobs.

Applying the principles of the circular economy to the bioeconomy plays an important role in ensuring that the

bioeconomy is indeed sustainable and the focus on substituting non-renewable resources and on biotechnological innovations in the bioeconomy can play a key role in implementing the circular economy principles (Lewandowski, 2018). For this reason, circularity has become an important element of the bioeconomy in the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy from 2018. The EU Bioeconomy Strategy is currently being updated with a new strategy expected by the end of 2025.

The EC published the first bioeconomy strategy in 2012 focusing on efficient use of renewable resources and on R&I (i.e. the resource substitution and innovation perspectives). The update bioeconomy strategy in 2018 complemented with a focus on substitution of non-renewable resources, regional development potential and understanding ecological limits. In 2022, the Bioeconomy Progress Report assessed the status of the implementation of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy. The bioeconomy is recognised as a major component for the implementation of the European Green Deal and is promoted to follow three sustainability dimensions: manage land and biological resources within ecological boundaries; sustainable value chains and consumption; and social fairness and just transition. The progress towards a sustainable bioeconomy in the EU is underway but gaps remain in reaching a sustainable (i.e., within ecological limits) management of the biosphere and ensuring more sustainable consumption patterns to guarantee environmental integrity (EU Commission, 2022a).

A bioeconomy based on sustainable biomass supply and demand that is able to manage healthy and resilient ecosystems is a prerequisite for a NPE. The bioeconomy takes a utilitarian view of nature and is more consistent with conventional economic approaches that put a higher value on extraction from nature for economic gains, while a NPE places equal emphasis on prosperity for all of society and nature recovery.

Circular economy

The circular economy is an economy with closed material loops that draws on the

inspiration from nature where the biological metabolism works in loops, effectively generating no waste, as all material is recycled (Beamer et al., 2021; Wautelet, 2018). The circular economy switches from the current linear economic model of extraction of raw materials, production, use, incineration and generation of waste to a circular relationship where everything is input into everything else. The concept seeks to ultimately decouple global economic development from finite resources consumption (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2012) but does not explicitly oppose economic growth. The circular economy focuses in particular on urban



and industrial waste to achieve a better balance and harmony between economy, environment, and society (Ghisellini et al., 2016) and has evolved from five main schools of thought since the 1970s: Industrial Ecology, Cradle to Cradle, Performance Economy, Blue Economy, and Biomimicry. Moving towards a circular industrial process will entail a rethinking of ownership of durable goods from individual

consumer ownership to e.g. leasing contracts with producers who re-collect and re-process the raw materials at the end of each lifecycle, which would benefit both economies, companies and consumers (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2012). Several of the economic concepts described previously place circularity at the core. See Table 1 and Figure 7 for a comparative analysis of selected economic models.

The new Circular Economy Action Plan of the EU is one of the main building blocks of the European Green Deal and aims to reduce the EU's consumption footprint and double its circular material use rate in the coming decade, while boosting economic growth.

The Circular Economy concept provides one mechanism that can contribute towards a NPE through the increase in resource use efficiencies and closing the loop on waste streams. However, a Circular Economy alone is not sufficient to reach a full recovery of nature.

Green Economy

Green economy is an economy that “results in improved human wellbeing and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient

and socially inclusive” (UNEP, 2011). It supports the achievement of sustainable development with an emphasis on aligning economic goals with social and environmental goals. It recognises the potential of new sustainable technologies and green sectors to become an engine of a new development pathway (UNECE/FAO, 2018). A green economy proposes to integrate economic and environmental policies in a way that highlights opportunities for new sources of economic growth while avoiding unsustainable pressure on the quality and quantity of natural assets (EEA). Circular economy has been recognised as one of the key components of an inclusive green economy (UNEP, 2015).

The EC refers frequently to the transition towards a green economy, e.g. in relation to resource efficiency, and the European Green Deal includes in effect a wide range of policies and initiatives designed to transform various sectors that would lead to a green economy.



While the green economy places an emphasis on low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive aspects, a NPE goes beyond this by aiming explicitly for full nature recovery and subsequent maintenance of a global net nature-neutral economy while ensuring prosperity for all of society.

With the “economy” we tend to refer to the actors, such as firms, individuals, governments, and citizens, whose daily decisions and behaviours influence how resources are used, depleted, or created. Essential actions have to do with consumption, savings, investment, production, and so forth. In markets, prices for goods and services, along with the compensation for production factors (e.g., commodities, land, labour, capital), are influenced by the relationship between supply and demand (Marshall, 1890, p. 1). Markets are not complete, however, due to various imperfections, such as asymmetric information and the presence of common goods, for which there is no natural ownership, and the distribution of income tends to be skewed giving rise to problems of inequality and social vulnerabilities. Technical progress along with innovation and entrepreneurship bring about changes to efficiency and the effectiveness with which production factors can be put to use.

Doughnut Economics

Economic models⁶ such as ‘Doughnut economics’ and ‘Regenerative economy’ propose an economic mindset that focuses on physical planetary and societal wellbeing (Gorissen et al., 2024; Konietzko et al., 2023; Raworth, 2017). Doughnut economics sets out the goal of ‘meeting the human rights of every person within the means of our life-giving planet’ (Raworth, 2017, p. 25).

⁶ An economic model can be understood as a theoretical construct representing economic processes through a set of variables and relationships (Dasgupta, 2021).

The doughnut consists of 12 basic human rights needs⁷ representing the social foundation and nine planetary boundaries comprising the ecological ceiling (Rockström et al., 2009). Overshooting the planetary boundaries to maintain our social foundation would lead to our planet not being able to regenerate in the future. All economic activities therefore need to take place in the space between the social foundation and the ecological ceiling - in the so-called ‘doughnut’.

Doughnut Economics moves away from the linear economic model of ‘take-make-use-lose’ towards a regenerative economy where businesses, for instance, go beyond ‘doing no harm’ to ‘doing more good’ by giving more back to the living systems than they take from it in the sense that the core business aims to reconnect nature’s cycles through generous industrial design (Raworth, 2022). Doughnut Economics operates with an ‘Embedded Economy, which nests the economy within society and within the living world, while recognising the diverse ways in which it can meet people’s needs and wants’ (Raworth, 2022, p. 71). The embedded economy is divided into four sections interlinked with financial flows: households, state, market and the commons. It stresses the importance of managing and sharing the commons collectively rather than privately, as the commons are central to our wellbeing and for the economy to work; it highlights the importance of including in economic policy the value of reproductive and unpaid work of households to the economy; it gives a central role to the state to support the market, households and the commons and to take entrepreneurial risks where the market and commons are limited. The doughnut economy is agnostic about economic growth, in that

⁷ Food, health, education, energy, water, housing, networks, income and work, peace and justice, political voice, social equity, gender equality.



the priority is designing an economy where human prosperity is promoted regardless of whether GDP increases or otherwise. The [Doughnut Economics Action Lab \(2024\)](#) outlines principles for companies to redesign their businesses through doughnut economics for transformative action.

NPE aligns well with such principles by recognising the economy as embedded within society and the living world and where economic activity needs to be regenerative, circular and socially just. NPE is positioned as a transitional model until full nature recovery is achieved, while doughnut economics highlights a safe and just living space for humanity.

Doughnut Economics has developed a range of tools and concepts that are being tested at local scale (e.g., the city of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Glasgow and [Tomelilla](#) in Sweden) and regional scale (e.g., Brussels Capital Region). Discussions at EU-scale have taken place via the informal Doughnut4EU cross-DG working group, which explores the opportunity for Doughnut Economics to provide a holistic and unifying framework for the EU's monitoring frameworks (Doughnut4EU, 2020).

Post-growth, degrowth, and steady state economy

The concepts of post-growth, degrowth and steady state economy share the premise that a continued reliance on a linear model of production and consumption will ultimately render economic growth unsustainable to the extent that the economy risks a catastrophic and socially unstable descent. Post-growth and degrowth concepts emphasise that it is possible to achieve prosperous and socially stable societies without indefinite economic growth (Hickel et al.,

2022; Hinton, 2021; O'Neill et al., 2017; Parrique, 2021). Degrowth is a transitional process, defined as a socially sustainable and equitable reduction and eventual stabilisation of the amount of throughput of materials and energy that are extracted, processed, transported and distributed in society for consumption and returned to the environment as waste (Kallis, 2011).

The end-state of stabilising material and energy throughput within ecological limits of the Earth implies a steady state economy with a relatively stable, mildly fluctuating level of consumption (First International Degrowth Conference 2008:318). A steady state economy is one that undergoes neither growth nor recession, resulting in a constant, but sustainable rate of throughput (Daly, 1993). The notion of steady state originates from before the industrial revolution (Smith 1776) and is one of the most extensively and concretely developed alternative discourses to economic growth.

NPE is categorically not the same as degrowth, post-growth and steady state economy concepts, but aligns with them in the agreement that human society must find a way to operate within the ecological limits of the planet and be socially equitable.

As with the degrowth concept, a nature-positive economy is a transitional process before the economy arrives in a state where nature is fully recovered and can maintain it. NPE does not oppose economic growth per se but requires a sufficient absolute decoupling, which is when GDP grows while material use and emissions decline enough to keep the economy within planetary boundaries (Stoknes & Rockström, 2018).

In a NPE, economic growth may occur in the context of industry sectors and activities that are well aligned with planetary boundaries.



Social Ecological Economics

‘Social ecological economics’ places the economy within its biophysical limits while recognising the need for human society to respect humans and non-humans, both present and future (Spash, 2017). The primary goals of society/economy are meeting the basic needs in a society that is ethical, respects the moral standing of others, both human and non-human animals, seeks equality and upholds justice.

Wellbeing Economy

The ‘Wellbeing economy’ draws from the idea of an economy that serves people and the planet, as well as advocating for an equitable distribution of wealth, health and wellbeing, while protecting and proactively regenerating the planet’s resources for future generation and other species (Hough-Stewart et al., 2019). A wellbeing economy requires dignity for all to live in comfort, safety and happiness; a restored and safe natural world for all life; a sense of belonging and institutions that serve the common good; justice in all dimensions at the heart of economic systems and the gap between the richest and poorest greatly reduced; and the active participation of citizens, engaged in their communities and locally rooted economies (ibid). The wellbeing economy is regenerative by design, purposeful, cooperative and collaborative and seeks to transform the economy away from the growth orientated development paradigm towards an economy that serves first and foremost people and communities (ibid). There are examples of purpose-driven business models with a long-term mindset to create products and services that satisfy the needs of society whilst respecting nature’s resources and constraints (Wellbeing Economy Alliance, 2020).

NPE aligns with social ecological and

wellbeing economics on the double premise of staying within the safe operating and living space of our planet, including nature recovery to heal the harm done to the ecological life support system, while serving human needs for equity, justice and wellbeing. NPE recognises the widest possible plurality of values placed upon nature.

On measuring economic development

A NPE would both require a different, or additional, approach(es) to how to measure economic progress and a gradual move away from the GDP growth dependencies of the conventional economic system towards a model that prioritises ecological health, biodiversity enhancement, and human and social welfare as key indicators of prosperity.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measures the market value of all final goods and services produced in a country over a given period. Since the 1940s, it has been a key indicator of economic health and progress (Kubiszewski et al., 2013). However, GDP growth has also become essential to mainstream policymaking, driving dependencies on expansion. Growth as defined by GDP has become widely assumed necessary to prevent unemployment, as investments in labour-saving technologies reduce the workforce needed for production. National tax revenues, critical for funding public services like healthcare and welfare, also depend on GDP, as do pensions and financial markets, which rise and fall with economic expansion (Jackson, 2022).

However, the predominant focus in policymaking on GDP as a measure of economic growth is tightly linked to the continued overexploitation and degradation of nature. When the value of nature included in decision making is narrowed



to include only the market values of nature, this means that non-market values associated with nature's contribution to people, including the functions, structure and ecosystem processes upon which life depends, is excluded from how businesses are run and how governments set priorities and regulate the commons. In relation to economic welfare, GDP also does not provide an appropriate measure as it does not account for income distribution (Kuznets, 1934) and levels of inequality between population groups, which is important for individual and social wellbeing. GDP also does not account for the level of human health, the educational aspects of a population or the value of unpaid household labour, volunteer work, services provided through the sharing economy or ecosystem services (Jackson, 2022). The depletion of capital assets (stocks) of any kind, including natural capital, human capital and built assets

such as infrastructure and housing do not leave any direct trace on GDP. The impact on GDP from losses to biodiversity or social erosion occurs only once the damage to the economy is done and the consequences erode material production and consumption. An alternative, a more comprehensive indicator or a dashboard of indicators to measure progress towards a NPE is needed (See Section 5).

It is widely acknowledged that for the global economy to operate sustainably, permanent, absolute, global and fast decoupling of resource use and other critical environmental pressures from GDP is required (Hickel & Kallis, 2020; OECD, 2002). As resource use is driving the biodiversity crises; both consumption and production must be addressed to reduce material extraction to sustainable levels (UNEP, 2024a).





Table 1. A comparative analysis of select economic models. Adapted from D’Amato & Korhonen (2021).

	Green Economy	Circular Economy	Bioeconomy	Net-Zero Economy	Nature-Positive Economy
Core ideas	An economy that results in improved human wellbeing and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities (UNEP, 2011).	An economy with closed material loops that draws on the inspiration from nature where the biological metabolism works in loops, effectively generating no waste, as all material is recycled (Beamer et al., 2021; Wautelet, 2018).	Focuses on all sectors and investments that produce, use, process, distribute or consume biological resources, including ecosystem services (EC, 2022). Emphasises sustainable production and consumption from biological resources.	An economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions (EC, 2018)	An economy where the net result of all economic activities combined leads to an absolute increase in nature, to the point of full recovery. The NPE contributes to achieving the UN SDGs to enhance liveability, societal wellbeing and prosperity for all of society.
Economic growth focus	Prioritises growth that is environmentally sustainable. Aims to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.	Prioritises growth from innovative business models and technologies that create value from waste, reduce dependency on finite resources, and promote regeneration of natural systems.	Prioritises growth from the sustainable use of biological resources, such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and biotechnology.	Prioritises growth that is climate neutral with more low carbon, energy- and resource efficient, circular projects. Priority to transform the global finance industry, i.e. through EU taxonomy to scale up investments and boost green technology development.	Prioritises growth from economic activities that are well aligned with planetary boundaries (e.g., agroecology, regenerative tourism, nature-based solutions). Emphasis on achieving social wellbeing and prosperity for all of society anchored in biophysical limits.



	Green Economy	Circular Economy	Bioeconomy	Net-Zero Economy	Nature-Positive Economy
Re-source use	Promotes renewable energy sources. Envisions a reduction in pollution and emission.	Focus on sustainable resource management through reuse and recycling of materials, thus minimising waste and resource consumption.	Focus on sustainable resource management through a decrease in abiotic inputs (especially fossil resources), compensated by extraction of biotic resources.	Focus on all parts of society and economic sectors to obtain net-zero from the power sector to industry, transport, buildings, agriculture and forestry.	Focus on restoring ecological conditions, sustainable use of resources, minimising and compensating for negative impacts to remain within planetary boundaries.
Social equity	Advocates for improved human wellbeing, poverty alleviation and social equity	Targets employment and regional development, but remains limited in addressing regional and global inequalities	Targets employment and development, especially in rural areas and in regional bioclusters, but remains limited in addressing regional and global inequalities	Aims to build a better future for all, while leaving no-one behind.	Advocates for improved human wellbeing and shared prosperity, poverty alleviation and social equity aligned with nature-positive economic activities.
Systemic change	Within the current growth paradigm, aims to integrate sustainability into all economic activities and prioritising environmental and social outcomes.	Within the current growth paradigm, aims to change how resources are managed and utilised, emphasising the elimination of waste and the continual use of materials.	Within the current growth paradigm, aims to foster a transition to a bio-based economy, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and promoting the sustainable use of biological resources.	Within the current growth paradigm, decouple greenhouse gas emissions from economic growth.	A shift away from conventional GDP growth alone, towards a model that places equal emphasis on ecological health, biodiversity enhancement, social wellbeing and prosperity for all of society.





4. Elements of a Nature-Positive Economy

A robust framing of the Nature-Positive Economy must consider interrelated elements of actors, scale, sectors and social wellbeing, with a clear focus on operationalisation (Figure 8). These elements are grounded in systems thinking, which is a way of thinking that establishes the boundaries of a system to understand its components (Flood, 2010;

Meadows, 2009; Monat & Gannon, 2015; Schulte & Knuts, 2022). The elements below provide a holistic and integrated approach of an economy to contribute to restored ecological conditions, increased human wellbeing, and increased uptake of diverse values of nature in decision-making processes.

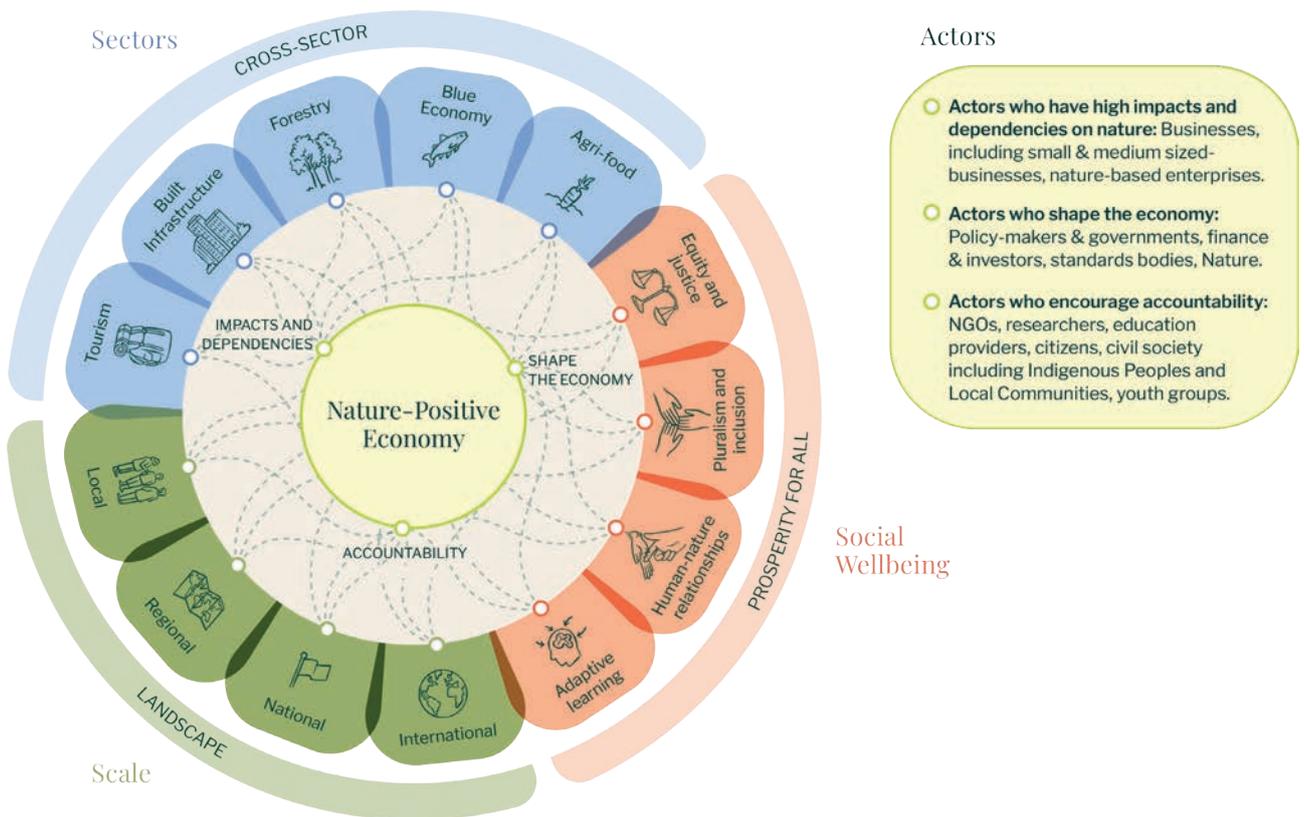


Figure 8. Key elements of a Nature-Positive Economy: Actions, Actors, Scale, Sectors, and Social Wellbeing.

Source: GoNP!



4.1 Operationalising the NPE

Actions to operationalise a nature-positive economy take many different forms across all actors, scales, sectors and societal goals. All actors are involved in the nature-positive journey. These actions consist of (Figure 9):

- (i) **Reduce negative impacts** on nature and address drivers of nature degradation.
- (ii) **Increase positive actions** on nature, with a priority being increased deployment

of nature-based solutions to protect, conserve, restore, and sustainably manage nature, and increased support for nature-based enterprises deploying such solutions.

- (iii) **Enact transformative change** towards full recovery on a societal scale.

These three actions necessitate a measured ecological baseline and a specified timeframe for change.

A Nature-Positive Economy

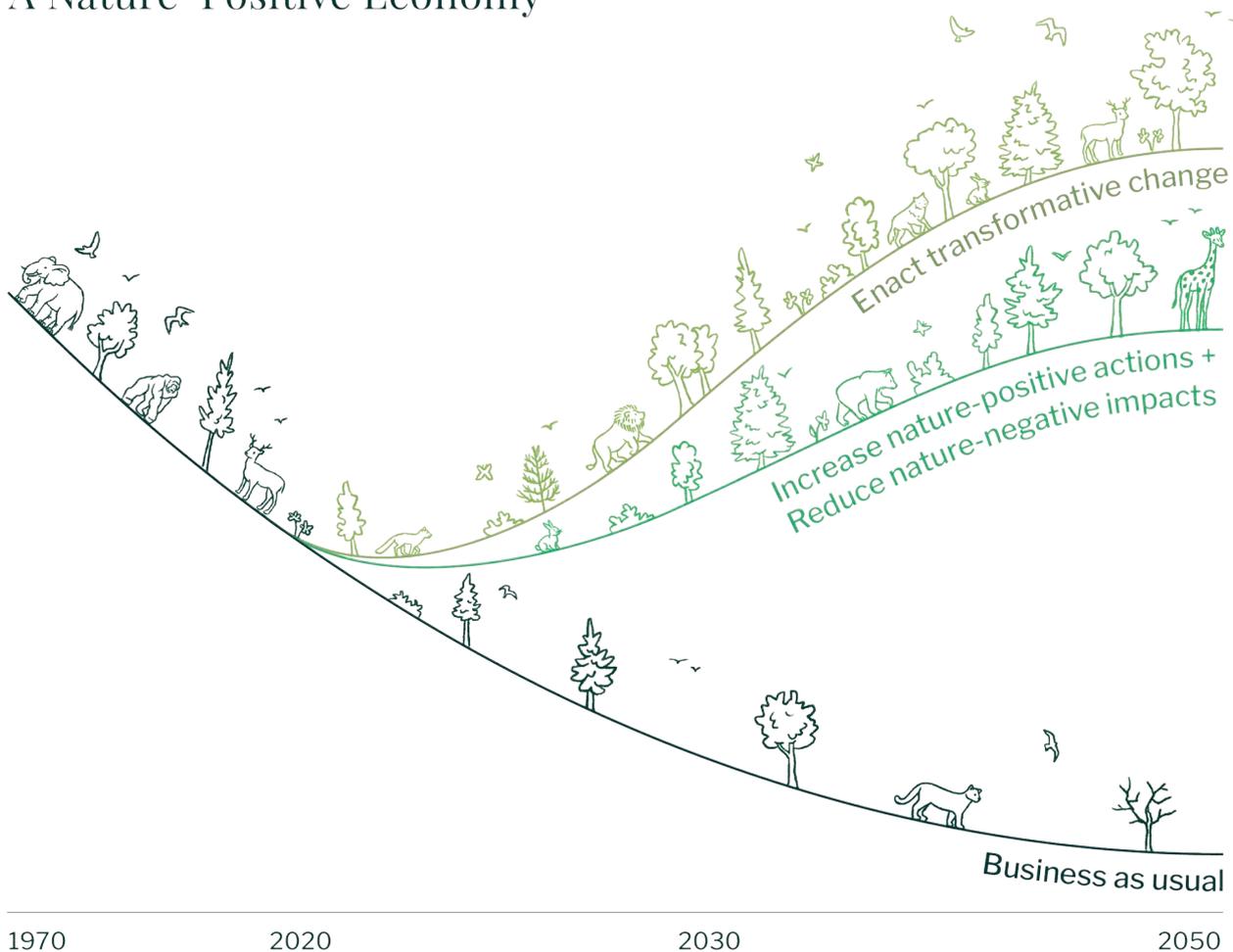


Figure 9. The NPE entails a transition away from a nature-negative economy towards an economy that is in harmony with nature and within planetary boundaries. Actions to operationalise the NPE consist of: 1. Reduce negative impacts on nature; 2. Increase positive impacts on nature; and 3. Enact transformative change.

Source: GoNPI, adapted from (Leclère et al., 2020).



4.1.1 Reduce negative impacts on nature

At the landscape and sector level, corporate-level transition plans can help to describe a company’s actions and provide guidance to reduce negative impacts and address overall impacts. Businesses can assess their nature-related impacts, dependencies, risks and

opportunities, across their value chains following internationally recognised frameworks such as those provided by TNFD, SBTN, and CSRD, among others. The Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy (MCH) is one illustrative framework for considering action across the value chain; towards business, sectoral, or higher level improvements (Milner-Gulland et al., 2021). Fig. 10 presents how NbS could be used to apply the MCH in agriculture.

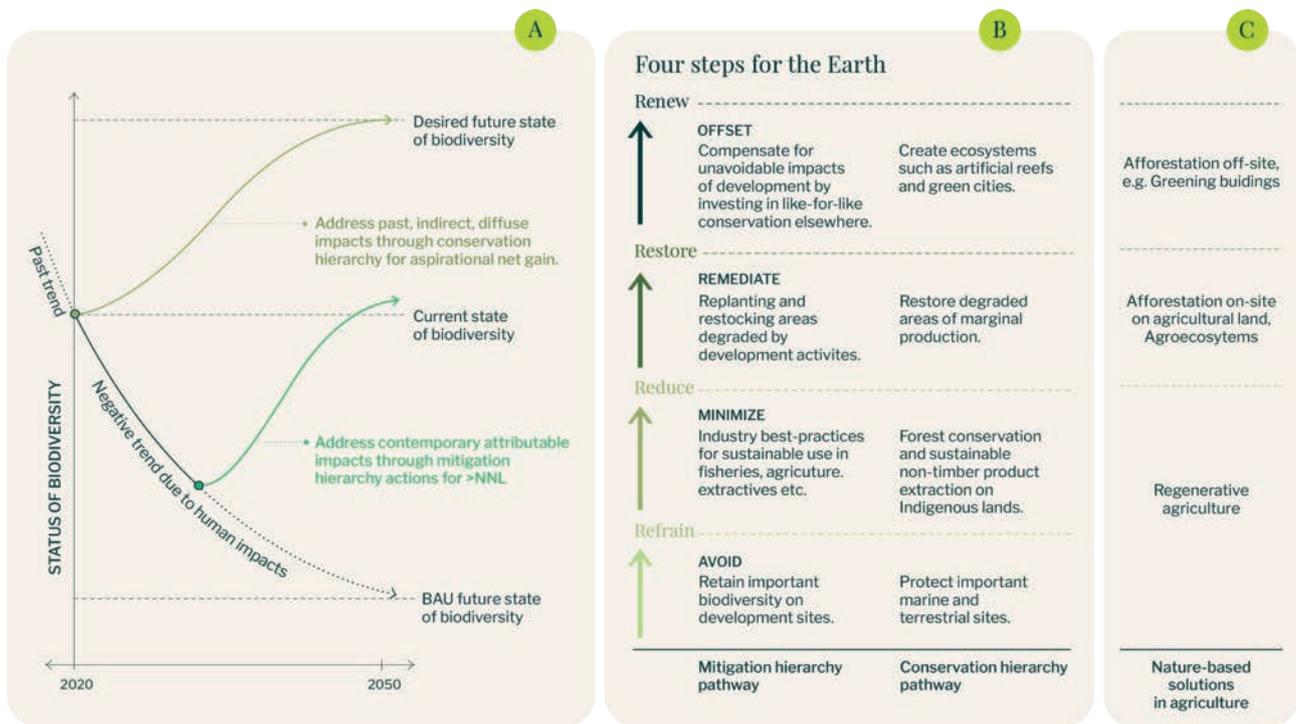


Figure 10. The Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy (MCH) offers a framework for implementing Nature Positive, where the scope of commitments and actions goes beyond the traditional Mitigation Hierarchy for site-based impacts with additional actions to renew nature. (A) denotes a timeline of restoring biodiversity towards a 2050 goal against a 2020 baseline. (B) presents the MCH of Refrain, Reduce, Restore, and Renew. (C) notes how Nature-based Solutions can be used to operationalize the MCH in agriculture. Source:GoNPI, adapted from: Milner-Gulland et al., 2021.



Box 4. What is the role of offsets in a Nature-Positive Economy?

Biodiversity offsets are measurable conservation outcomes to compensate for residual biodiversity losses with equivalent gains. A common policy goal of offsets is No Net Loss or Net Gain. Offsets will likely have some role to play in a nature-positive future, as there remains a need to address residual biodiversity losses after rigorous application of the mitigation and conservation hierarchy (see Box 3, offsets may be used to achieve net outcomes). This consists of firstly avoiding impacts (e.g., choosing the least damaging spatial placement for development from all viable options); secondly minimising and reducing impacts (e.g., minimising spatial and temporal impacts); thirdly restoring impacts on-site (e.g., degraded ecosystem restoration, reforestation) and lastly renewing biodiversity elsewhere (e.g., ecosystem creation, rewilding) (Koh et al., 2017; Milner-Gulland et al., 2021). Offsets can be used to facilitate restoration activities, in line with the [AR3T framework](#) outlined by SBTN.

Offsets may have a proportionally larger role in a NPE if used to expand the scope of losses being mitigated, such as along corporate value chains (Maron et al., 2025). The EU Business and Biodiversity Platform's Nature Positive Principles emphasise that location-specific impacts (e.g., biodiversity, water) need to be addressed at the respective location, whereby the local balance should be positive (EU Business and Biodiversity Platform, 2022). Offsets should be applied according to industry standards such as BBOP guidelines (2012) with consideration for social impacts and wellbeing (Bull et al., 2018a). There is also guidance on recognising limits to offsetting and protecting biodiversity with significant conservation values (BBOP, 2012a).

Parallels can be drawn between biodiversity offsets and the emerging biodiversity credit market, such as in the EC Roadmap towards nature credits (EU Commission, 2025). The assumption is that industry commitments to nature positive may drive a voluntary biodiversity credit market, as companies disclose their biodiversity impacts and seek to purchase credits for contributions to nature. Improved rigour and integrity is needed in both offset policies and credit markets; there are decades of lessons learned on high-integrity implementation of the mitigation hierarchy and offsets (Maron et al., 2025). Despite ongoing debates around the effectiveness of offsets and credits, current biodiversity finance remains vastly overshadowed by the scale of funding directed toward nature-negative activities (Selomane et al., 2025; UNEP, 2023). This imbalance highlights an urgent need to redirect harmful subsidies and scale up investments that support nature-positive outcomes.



As offsets have a mixed track record with adhering to the mitigation hierarchy and achieving No Net Loss outcomes, improving compliance is essential (Clare et al., 2011; Theis et al., 2020; zu Ermgassen et al., 2019). One initiative is the IUCN's key principles for high-integrity net outcomes, which includes ecological principles such as adherence to the mitigation hierarchy, limits to what can be offset, equivalence, and long-term outcomes, as well as social principles of equity, stakeholder participation, and scientific and traditional ecological knowledge (IUCN, 2023). Efforts are needed both in the effective implementation of offsets to address direct impacts causing biodiversity loss as well as broader, transformative policy actions across economic and political systems for a holistic approach to development that does not contribute to biodiversity loss in the first place.

Moreover, offsets tend to emphasise a utilitarian perspective of nature. Greater attention should be paid to the ethics of offsets with methods that account for multiple values of nature, including unique, place-based and relational values (Ives & Bekessy, 2015). Issues of equity and justice must be addressed to avoid leaving people worse off (see Section 4.5). Over a decade of experience is available from best practice guidance and frameworks to safeguard social outcomes with meaningful stakeholder engagement (e.g., BBOP, 2009; Bull et al., 2018; Griffiths et al., 2020). This includes considerations such as to measure changes in wellbeing throughout the project's lifetime, ensure benefits are allocated to the people who have been affected by the offset, achieve equitable social outcomes, implement conflict-resolution mechanisms and more. Adequate time and care must be allocated to implement safeguards effectively in an inclusive and culturally appropriate manner (Takacs, 2020).



The MCH is a framework that applies in relation to an overall impact assessment and after a nature strategy is developed. Conducting a materiality screening and analysis would help to ensure that the MCH effectively addresses material impacts on nature.

Double materiality represents the way forward in assessing and measuring impacts on nature, as it provides both the outside-in perspective (that of key external stakeholders, including nature and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities), and the inside-out perspective (that of key internal stakeholders, such as management).

Plotting these two perspectives in the same graph, while also accounting for objective impacts on nature (sectoral level materiality screening), helps companies prioritise among different nature impacts addressing first the most material ones with the MCH (Figure 11).

The need to apply double materiality is heavily stressed by all relevant reporting standards and action frameworks (i.e., TNFD, SBTN, CSRD, GRI). This is because, for instance, a company could use the MCH to minimise its greenhouse gas emissions, while these are actually not material compared to water consumption or pollution (by conducting a materiality screening and by developing a double materiality matrix, said business would realise water is paramount to its internal and external stakeholders).

The business may also realise it has a heavy reliance on water availability for running its operations (and/or value chain) and that it is exposed to significant water related risks in water stressed areas). It would therefore be in the interest of both internal and external stakeholders that the business addresses water impacts, risks and dependencies using the MCH, while greenhouse gas emissions can be addressed at a second stage if they are deemed to be less material to all stakeholders.



Figure 11. Likely materiality by sector (left column), for upstream value chain and direct operations categorised according to IPBES pressures on biodiversity (right columns).
Source: GoNPI, adapted from SBTN (2021) Sectoral Materiality Screening Tool.



Further examples are available of roadmaps for a NPE, including: sector-level roadmaps to support the development of corporate NP in terms of target setting, actions, and metrics; roadmaps for financial institutions with measures to promote the development of NP clients; and roadmaps for national level NP goals (Groot et al., 2024). The latter clarifies roles and responsibilities for different actors, and adaptation of a policy mix of instruments that support NP measures, thus improving inclusion and implementation of these principles at domestic levels of policy and regulation. Policymakers can also ensure finance and lending are only granted to nature-positive economic activities and enterprises, or to those that have demonstrated clear progress towards reducing impacts on nature and towards mitigating nature-related risks in their operations and value chains. From the Global Biodiversity Framework, Target 15 ‘Businesses Assess, Disclose and Reduce Biodiversity-Related Risks and Negative Impacts’ and Target 18 ‘Reduce Harmful Incentives and Scale Up Positive Incentives for Biodiversity’ are particularly relevant to reducing negative impacts on nature.

Beyond reducing site and project-level impacts, interventions should also consider their impacts on the direct drivers of nature loss - climate change, land/sea-use change, resource use, pollution, and invasive alien species (IPBES, 2019). There is guidance for businesses to identify, measure, evaluate and act on their relationships with nature. For instance, the ACT-D framework by Capitals Coalition and partners entails acting, committing, transforming, and disclosing to drive high-level business actions on nature. This includes investing in circular business models, engaging in landscape-level and jurisdictional approaches to reduce negative impacts like deforestation and increase positive impacts through nature-based solutions, divesting from assets that degrade nature and

redirect resources towards sustainable use, resilience, restoration, and circularity.

Another example of guidance is by TNFD in their LEAP approach on identifying a company’s dependencies and impacts on nature, with examples of how business impacts affect the drivers of nature change (TNFD, 2023b). The Drivers, Pressures, State, Impacts and Response (DPSIR) framework also provides an integrated approach for understanding relationships between a policy action (Response) on Drivers of nature change, on State of the environment or on Impacts (Smeets & Weterings, 1999). A preventative policy would aim at the reduction of Pressures and thereby address the driving forces of change (e.g., changing production patterns, reducing consumption) (Maxim et al., 2009). To tackle the underlying indirect drivers of nature loss, interventions can be planned through incentives and capacity-building; cross-sectoral cooperation, pre-emptive action; decision-making in the face of uncertainty; and environmental law and implementation (IPBES, 2019). The development of the [State of Nature](#) metrics by NPI will help monitor whether efforts are contributing to nature’s recovery, with intended future integration into standards frameworks like TNFD and SBTN.

4.1.2 Increase positive actions on nature

Nature-based solutions and nature-based enterprises offer important pathways in a nature-positive economy.

Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, conserve, and restore ecosystems, as well as address social, economic, and environmental challenges (UNEA/EA.5/Res.5). These solutions, which include actions like restoring wetlands, afforesting degraded lands, and implementing agroecology, are designed to work



with nature to enhance biodiversity, sequester carbon, improve resilience to climate change as well as improve human wellbeing. The [EU Commission](#)'s definition emphasises that NbS must benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services. It notes that NbS brings more nature across all habitat types and sectors, from cities, landscapes, and seascapes. In cities, NbS includes actions to prevent air and water pollution, increase green space area, as well as replenish groundwater availability (WEF, 2024). Greater access to public green spaces, a richer biodiversity and other improvements to nature quality also contribute to the health and wellbeing of citizens. The [IUCN Global Standard for NbS](#) provides a widely accepted reference for ensuring a holistic approach for NbS to contribute towards nature, climate, and people.

Nature-based solutions can help to reduce impacts and risks to business and the economy from nature loss, while simultaneously restoring nature and creating benefits for wider society. Integrating nature-based solutions, like agro-ecological/regenerative farming practices and natural water management solutions, into the value chains and operations of businesses makes good business sense.

Nature-based enterprises, such as agro-ecology farmers or green building providers, deliver nature-based solutions - either as stand-alone suppliers or integrated into corporate value chains. Nature-based enterprises are experiencing high market demand, and need support to scale and grow, creating more jobs as part of a just transition to a nature-positive economy. Investing in NbS could create up to 32 million new jobs by 2030 (ILO & IUCN, 2024)

Realising the potential of NbS and NbE

requires overcoming barriers to private sector engagement and investment in nature. From the Global Biodiversity Framework, Target 11 'Restore, Maintain and Enhance Nature's Contributions to People' and Target 19 'Mobilise \$200 Billion per Year for Biodiversity' provide policy support for increasing positive impacts on nature. The EC Commission report (2022) identified that large scale investment in NbS presents significant but largely unexplored potential to deliver a viable route to a Nature-Positive Economy. In 2022, the main source of global NbS finance flows was from public funding with 82% of total flows (US\$165 billion) (UNEP, 2023). From public finance flows, 75% is directed to protection of biodiversity and landscapes and 41% to sustainable agriculture, forestry and fishing. There is significant scope for increased corporate investment in NbS, with the need for measures to establish NbS standards as well as participatory guarantee systems to avoid greenwashing, reduce risk, and provide confidence to investors (EU Commission, 2022b).

To address the barriers that prevent the scaling up of blended finance for climate and biodiversity, policymakers should apply a holistic approach with "vertical" solutions (e.g., pooling of risks and standardisation) and "horizontal" solutions (e.g., project preparation facilities) (EIB, 2023). NbS should also be designed and implemented in partnership with local communities, farmers, businesses, and/or indigenous groups to ensure social and ecological effectiveness and delivery of equitable benefits (Chausson et al., 2024). Financing has also been identified as a key factor hindering the scale-up of nature-based enterprises (McQuaid et al. 2021). Research has shown that significant internal barriers to NbE financing included lack of time, staff capacity, and skills to pursue financing. External barriers include misalignment with private investors (e.g., profit motives vs.



long-term nature goals), limited investor understanding of nature-based models, weak legal/regulatory frameworks in some regions and difficulty accessing appropriate funding instruments (Tedeschini et al., 2024).

Furthermore, there are opportunities to consider both climate and biodiversity goals simultaneously. In Wales, the government and researchers have co-created nature-positive and climate-neutral pathways for land use systems that include shifting food consumption patterns, planting trees, establishing new protected areas and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), restoring peatlands, and reducing food waste (Jones et al., 2023). The WWF outlines guidance for companies to integrate nature into existing climate transition planning frameworks (e.g., through investing in NbS climate solutions) and aligning climate transition plans with the GBF (e.g., mitigating negative impacts) (WWF, 2023)

4.1.3 Enact transformative change

Transformative Change and NPE

Transformative change is defined as fundamental, system-wide shifts in views, structures, and practices (IPBES, 2024c). Views include ways of thinking, knowing and seeing. Structures refer to ways of organizing, regulating and governing. Practices represent ways of doing, behaving and relating. **Four key principles** have been identified to guide transformative change across views, structures, and practices, in ways that address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and nature's decline (ibid):

- Equity and justice: Ensuring fair distribution of benefits and responsibilities, and correcting historical

and structural inequalities.

- Pluralism and inclusion: Valuing diverse worldviews, knowledge systems, and stakeholder participation in decision-making.
- Respectful and reciprocal human-nature relationships: Fostering stewardship and mutual care between people and nature.
- Adaptive learning and action: Embracing flexibility, learning from experience, and adjusting strategies as conditions evolve.

Embodying these key principles would also help to strengthen the NPE and ensure social wellbeing alongside nature restoration (see Section 4.5). These principles are essential for countering the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and for guiding processes that are attentive to both intended and unintended impacts. The three key underlying causes of biodiversity loss are: (a) disconnection from and domination over nature and people; (b) concentration of power and wealth; and (c) prioritization of short-term, individual and material gains (IPBES, 2024c). Several persistent barriers also hinder the realization of transformative change (IPBES, 2024c):

- Relations of domination, especially those rooted in colonial histories, that maintain inequitable power dynamics.
- Economic and political inequalities, which limit participation and agency for marginalized groups.
- Inadequate policies and institutions that are unfit to address current challenges.
- Unsustainable consumption and production patterns, often incentivized by prevailing economic systems.
- Limited access to clean technologies and fragmented knowledge and innovation systems.

Economic and financial systems play a particularly significant role in these barriers. Dominant market-driven paradigms,



focused on GDP and short-term returns, fail to account for the broader social and ecological costs, reinforcing unsustainable and inequitable growth. The economy is central to both the problem and the solution. Economic and financial systems must evolve to support just and sustainable outcomes, moving away from models that incentivize environmental harm and social inequity.

A NPE outlines an economic system to address some of these barriers by recognising the economy as embedded within society and the living world, where economic activities need to be regenerative and socially just. The priorities of a NPE are social wellbeing and prosperity for all of society, through an economy anchored in biophysical limits and an increased uptake of diverse values of nature in decision-making processes.

NPE guided by plural valuation of nature to achieve transformative change

New economic paradigms can be designed to centre justice, inclusion, resilience, and sustainability by revising goals, metrics, and indicators of progress that capture diverse values of nature (Gosnell et al., 2025). Thus, valuation – more specifically plural valuation – is an important part of NPE, as it allows us to include diverse values of nature in decision making (Box 5), without reducing them to an instrumental logic or monetary metric. As a nature-positive economy emphasises restored ecological conditions and increased human wellbeing, measuring progress on these requires ecological, social, and economic indicators (see Section 5).

Crucially, the NPE must recognise the diverse values of nature through plural valuation methods. The NPE is an economy

in which diverse values of nature are more thoroughly and explicitly recognised in policy and decision-making. Policymakers could reform policies and regulations for institutions to embrace diverse values of nature. This includes changing economic indicators of ‘progress’ beyond Gross Domestic Product towards indicators that incorporate unaccounted social and ecological values and costs such as the Genuine Progress Indicator, the Indicator of Sustainable Economic Welfare, the Sustainable Development Index, Inclusive Wealth, Gross Ecosystem Product (European Commission. Joint Research Centre., 2024; Martin et al., 2024; Pascual et al., 2023). The [Capitals Coalition Integrated Decision-making Framework](#) enables plural valuation in decision-making and provides a practical approach for an integrated capitals assessment with a clear governance structure (Capitals Coalition, 2025). While most approaches to decision-making focus only on financial capital, the framework integrates natural, human, social, and produced capital. It provides guidance for users on how to value these four capitals systemically in decisions and ensures transparency in the valuation method used.

Transformative change requires a system-wide reorganization across technological, economic, and social factors, including shifts in paradigms, goals, and values. The underlying causes of biodiversity loss can be addressed through prioritising respectful and reciprocal human-nature relationships, equity and shared prosperity, and a shift towards long term collective gain. The IPBES assessment outlines main areas for action, where the NPE can play a crucial role in each of these areas (Table 2). Strategies for transformative change include driving systemic change in sectors most responsible for biodiversity loss and transforming economic systems for nature and equity. Transformative change is rarely the result of a single intervention. Instead,



it emerges from coordinated actions across multiple leverage points involving diverse actors and sectors, which aligns with the whole-of-society approach of the NPE.

Initiatives that address indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and foster collaboration yield more positive outcomes for societies, economies, and nature, often within a decade or less (IPBES, 2024c).

Table 2. Strategies to advance transformative change with actions related to the nature-positive economy. Adapted from (IPBES, 2024c).

Strategies to advance Transformative Change	Actions related to the Nature-Positive Economy.
<p>Conserve and regenerate places of value to nature and people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regenerative practices that protect and promote both biological and cultural diversity exist in cultures all over the world: • Japan: Satoyama and satoumi refer to harmonious interaction between humans and nature in rural landscapes and seascapes), which views culture and ecosystems as integrated and co-evolving for nature regeneration (Japan Ministry of the Environment, 2024). • Nepal: Community forestry programme integrates decentralized forest policy into local communities’ needs, views and practices to restore and manage degraded forests (Gosnell et al., 2025). • Colombia: Agroecology transitions through the Reservas Campesina helped to implement sustainable agricultural systems and secure Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination (Acevedo-Osorio & Chohan, 2020).
<p>Drive systemic change in sectors most responsible for biodiversity loss</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform subsidies and incentives so that harmful sectors would be less profitable, such as redirecting environmentally harmful subsidies and encouraging investments in sustainable practices (e.g., payments for environmental services in Costa Rica) (Pagiola, 2008). • Increase private sector accountability through public reporting of nature impacts (e.g., LEAP approach by TNFD, EU CSRD). • Mobilise technologies to redirect development towards sustainability and equity (e.g., smart energy and water management, digitalization of food systems, transport and logistics solutions, building materials and construction, environmental monitoring).



Transform economic systems for nature and equity

- Adopt metrics of progress that reflect social, cultural, and environmental dimensions, not just economic output (see Section 5).
- Embed the diverse values of nature into decision-making of land use decisions at all levels (e.g., see Kelemen et al., 2022).
- Promote business models and financial flows that regenerate rather than deplete natural systems (see Section 4.4).
- Regulate global supply chains to reduce their reliance on ecologically harmful extractive processes and reduce negative impacts of trade on nature. This can be supported by positive incentives such as adjusting taxes, subsidies, payments for ecosystem services, permits, standards or regulations.

Transform governance systems to be integrated, inclusive, accountable, and adaptive

- Inclusive governance systems that engage diverse actors ensure the representation of a plurality of world views, practices and knowledge systems (Dawson et al., 2024).
- Transparent and inclusive monitoring that engages a diversity of actors perspectives, learnings and evaluative frameworks that enable empowerment, participation (Whitehorn et al., 2019).

Shift societal views and values to recognize and prioritize human-nature interconnectedness

- Incorporate nature-connectedness into educational and learning processes (e.g., [The BeNature Guide](#) for educators and communities to promote stronger relationships with nature)
- Shift dominant societal views and values, alongside transforming cultural narratives and social norms around production and consumption (e.g., Flightshame, Becken et al 2021).
- World views and values held by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well as other groups, that reflect harmony and interdependencies with nature based on ethics of care (e.g., Sumak Kawsay, Ubuntu, Whakapapa).
- Indigenous philosophies such as Aloha 'Āina in Hawaii emphasize reciprocity and a relationship with the land, which can inform economic concepts with ideas of circularity, resource efficiency, and waste prevention (Beamer et al., 2021).



Box 5. Diverse values of nature. Source: (IPBES, 2022; Pascual et al., 2023).

The [IPBES Methodological Assessment of the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature](#) analysed more than 50,000 scientific publications, policy documents and Indigenous and local knowledge sources to assess knowledge on nature's diverse values and valuation methods. The assessment conceptualised human-nature relationships and proposed a typology of nature's values that highlights how different worldviews and knowledge systems influence the ways people interact with and value nature. IPBES recognizes three types of nature-related values: instrumental (nature for society), intrinsic (nature for nature), and relational (nature as culture/one with nature). The diverse values of nature can be understood as:

'Living **from**' nature that emphasizes instrumental values such as nature's capacity to provide resources for sustaining livelihoods.

'Living **in**' nature that focuses on how people recognize nature's importance as settings for their lives, practices and cultures, particularly supporting relational values.

'Living **with**' nature that centres on nature's life-supporting processes and connections to other-than-human beings, thereby prioritizing both intrinsic and relational values.

'Living **as**' nature that prioritizes embodying and perceiving nature as a physical, mental and spiritual part of oneself, emphasizing broad relational values of oneness, kinship and interdependence.

Current biodiversity policies and regulations tend to focus on instrumental values of nature through economic valuation approaches and monetary indicators (Pascual et al., 2023). **Value pluralism** entails recognising the diverse values of nature (instrumental, intrinsic, relational) with a range of valuation methods (nature-based valuation, behaviour-based valuation, statement-based valuation, integrated valuation) and value indicators (biophysical, socio-cultural, monetary). Balancing market-based instrumental values of nature with relational, intrinsic, and non-market instrumental is needed to demonstrate the diversity of ways in which nature matters to people.



4.2 Actors

All actors in society have a role to play in a just and sustainable transition process. Nature Positive is fundamentally a society-wide outcome (Baggaley et al., 2023; White et al., 2024), achievable only through collective contributions from all actors operating across scales, sectors, grounded in social wellbeing in equity.

In environmental governance, actors can be categorised across State, Market, and Community groups (Lemos & Agrawal, 2012). State actors include policymakers and governments. Market actors span businesses including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), nature-based enterprises, finance and investors, as well as standards bodies. Community groups consist of NGOs, researchers, and civil society including Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), as well as youth. Combining this with an embedded representation of the economy in society and nature, shows us clear pathways through which different actors can work with and shape the NPE (Figure 12).

There are three main roles of actors, with many actors playing multiple roles: (i) Actors who have high impact and dependencies on nature; (ii) Actors who shape the economy; and (iii) Actors who encourage accountability.

Actors who have high impact and dependencies on nature comprise of businesses and nature-based enterprises, as all businesses ultimately depend on nature (IPBES Business and Biodiversity Assessment, forthcoming). They undertake a variety of actions from extractive nature-negative actions to restoration and stewardship-minded nature-positive actions. It is the combination of these positive and negative actions that will drive the economy towards nature positive or

remain in the nature-degrading system, with degradation ultimately also negatively affecting the market actors themselves. This combination of exerting pressures on nature, being impacted by nature and being in the capacity to take nature-positive actions, means that enterprises have a clear responsibility and motivation to act. As seen in Figure 12, there is a spectrum between nature-based enterprises and businesses in terms of their contributions to nature regeneration. Nature-based enterprises integrate nature regeneration as a core part of their business model (EU Commission, 2022b), while other businesses can move along this spectrum by enhancing their contributions through nature transition planning (TNFD, 2024) or by including nature-based solutions and nature-based enterprises in their supply chains.

Actors who shape the economy include policymakers and governments, finance and investors, standards bodies, and Nature. These actors implicitly or explicitly set the rules for enterprises to act within. It is therefore the clear responsibility for these actors to set the rules as such that nature-negative actions are disincentivized and nature-positive actions are rewarded. Nature is a relevant actor here as the economy is embedded within nature, fundamentally dependent on its ecosystems for resources and services, and constrained by the planet's biophysical limits. Nature has its own agency and gives clear signals that we are exiting the safe operating space for humans, urging society and economy to drastically and rapidly change.

Actors who encourage accountability comprise of NGOs, researchers, education providers, citizens, civil society including youth, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. These actors have the power and therefore responsibility to signal to the ones that shape the structure of the



economy and the enterprises that operate in it, that we need to shift to a nature-positive economy. This can be done through voting, consumer choices, pressuring, and challenging. NGOs represent the interests of nature and society, while academia and researchers look for ways to understand,

evaluate, and improve our society and the natural world it is embedded. Moreover, this group can also lead the way in taking nature-positive actions directly. The role of each actor is discussed in further detail as follows.

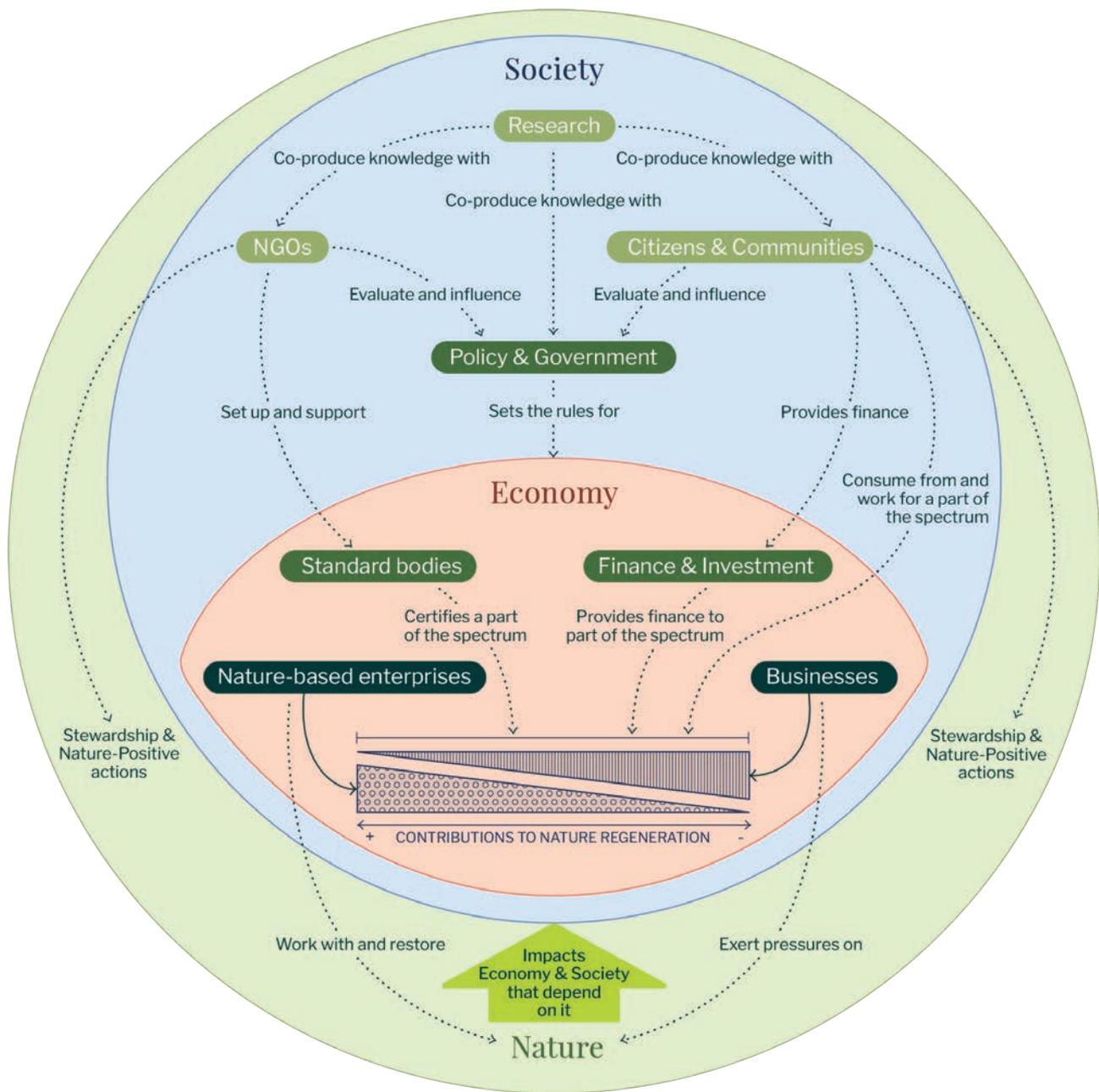


Figure 12. Actors and their interactions in shaping the Nature-Positive Economy. Source: GoNP!



4.2.1 Actors who have high impacts and dependencies on nature

Businesses

All businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises and nature-based enterprises, must and will increasingly seek to contribute towards NP (zu Ermgassen et al., 2022). While the most ambitious actions by single companies cannot deliver nature positive if implemented in isolation, individual businesses can and should start taking action across their operations and value chains to contribute to this international Nature Positive goal (Baggaley et al., 2023; White et al., 2024). Each company can assess their material impacts, dependencies, risks, and opportunities associated with nature. This includes emerging industry standards of assessment, reporting, and disclosure such as the Assess, Commit, Transform and Disclose (**ACT-D**) framework, the **AR3T** framework by SBTN, the 'LEAP' framework provided by the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy, Biodiversity Footprint Methodology, Biodiversity Impact Metric, Biodiversity Indicators for Site-based Impacts and more (Lammerant et al., 2022). Consequently, they can take actions on nature such as by making policy commitments on mitigating impacts associated with nature, committing to e.g. Science-Based Targets for Nature, implementing NbS, and more. At a sectoral level, they can coordinate for best practice, collaborate on a landscape scale, integrate natural capital into decision-making, and advocate to governments for policy ambition.

Nature-based Enterprises

Nature-based enterprises are an umbrella

term used to describe businesses driven by a mission to work with and for nature. These are businesses where nature retention and/or restoration is a core element of their product or service offering (EU Commission, 2022b; Kooijman et al., 2021). These businesses, usually operating in the private sector, play a vital role in the delivery of nature-based solutions and ecosystem services (e.g., agroecology, urban green buildings). Simultaneously, NbEs often generate high socio-economic impacts, contributing to innovation, skills development and job creation as part of the just transition of local economies to more sustainable sectors of economic development (ILO & IUCN, 2024; Raes et al., 2021). NbE play a pivotal role in aligning business practices with broader ecological and community needs.

4.2.2 Actors who shape the economy

Policy-makers and governments

Governments are essential for providing the architecture and rules for the NPE, by reinforcing existing policies as well as enacting new regulations that protect and restore biodiversity (Groot et al., 2024). At an international level, the GBF and other multilateral environmental agreements outline the commitments made by Member States, by which national governments have the mandate to translate into National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) for implementation. NBSAPs can consider spatial, nature-specific, sectoral, and monetary policies (Groot et al., 2024). Policy-makers includes politicians, public administration bodies, and regulators.

Regional regulations may also apply. As discussed above, the **EU Nature Restoration Regulation** will increase the need for legal and compliance services



as businesses navigate the regulatory complexities and sustainability reporting requirements introduced by the law. Learnings can also be derived from the net zero transition and Roadmap to a net zero economy to identify equivalent nature-related legislation and policies (WWF, 2022). As trade-offs may occur between nature and climate goals across sectors, integrated decision making is needed to explicitly assess and optimise synergies. The 'National Nature-Positive Pathways' report provides guidance to identify interlinkages across sectors (Aviva & WWF UK, 2024). Moreover, complementary legislation may arise at the national and sub-national level. In England, newly mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements lay the basis for gains in habitat to compensate for development activities (Duffus et al., 2025).

Beyond implementing legislation, governments have a key role to play in the NPE in terms of managing subsidies and monetary/fiscal policies, as well as mainstreaming biodiversity in public funding programmes. For instance, the governments of Japan and Scotland are exploring their own national economy transition strategies of a NPE (Japan Ministry of the Environment, 2024; Martino et al., 2024). Subsidies towards economic activities that negatively impact nature currently dwarf investments in nature conservation (Deutz et al., 2020). According to Business for Nature, the world is spending at least \$2.6 trillion a year on harmful subsidies, equivalent to 2.5% of global GDP (Business for Nature, 2024a). Government decision-making will have to reform financial incentives and redirect subsidies away from ecologically harmful activities towards nature-positive activities such as the implementation of NbS and the establishment of NbE. Business for Nature has published guidance for governments to reform harmful subsidies, noting the need to identify harmful subsidies, remove, and

redirect subsidies towards activities that protect nature and/or social goals (Business for Nature, 2023, 2024b).

Governments can also increase taxes on biodiversity-damaging enterprises and reduce them on biodiversity-protecting ones such as NbE. 'Debt-for-nature' swaps are an example of a financial incentive that need to be reformed to maximise effectiveness, with the opportunity to integrate metrics across biodiversity conservation, emissions reduction, and climate adaptation to allocate funds most efficiently (Losos et al., 2024).

Finance and investment organisations

Financial institutions are dependent on nature, as 75% of all corporate loan exposures in the euro area have a strong dependency on at least one ecosystem service (Boldrini et al., 2023). Finance for Biodiversity and UNEP-FI have developed a discussion paper that outlines three levels of nature-positive finance for financial institutions (Finance for Biodiversity Foundation & UNEP, 2024). First, compliance with the mitigation hierarchy. Second, support of transformative opportunities for the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Third, organisation strategy and governance for a NP ambition to be endorsed by boards and nature commitments embedded in decision-making. Financial institutions are called to monitor their contributions to the Global Biodiversity Framework as they aim to avoid nature deterioration and biodiversity loss, (by phasing-out from activities with adverse impacts and reducing drivers of loss), generate biodiversity gains, and transform value chains (by supporting system scale changes).

Insurance is also a key area for a nature-positive future, with dual roles and



responsibilities as: (i) an enabler of economic activities, addressing nature-related issues, including negative externalities such as drivers of nature loss; and (ii) as a risk manager and risk carrier addressing emerging risks from nature loss and absorbing financial shocks to build resilience for communities and economies (UNEP, 2024b).

From a regulation perspective, the [EU Directive on Corporate Sustainability Reporting \(EU CSRD\)](#) and [Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation \(SFDR\)](#) legislation provide requirements for companies to report on how their activities impact people and the environment. CSRD will require large companies to also disclose impacts, risks and dependencies related to nature and biodiversity from 2025. [EU Taxonomy](#) requires companies and investors to disclose investments and demonstrate environmental sustainability. The EU Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation establishes how financial market participants disclose sustainability information. The SFDR is also designed to allow investors to make informed choices in supporting sustainability objectives and assess how sustainability risks are integrated in the investment decision process. The [EU Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence](#) addresses companies' operations across their global value chains, requiring companies to identify and address adverse human rights and environmental impacts of their actions inside and outside Europe.

Moreover, there is the need to capture regulation of markets. Central banks and financial regulators should strengthen regulations to redirect financial flows away from harmful activities towards nature-positive investments and promote transparency and accountability in financial markets (Groot et al. 2024). Central banks and financial regulators should integrate biodiversity risks into financial stability

assessments and frameworks, ensuring that nature-related financial risks are adequately managed. Central banks should adopt new targets alongside inflation, such as maintaining the 1.5°C global warming ceiling and fully recovering biodiversity by 2050. Other actors are International Development Institutions and International Financial Institutions that can include nature-positive goals and align investments with biodiversity and climate goals, increase funding for nature positive projects and provide financial support to assist nature-rich developing countries to transition.

Standards bodies

Standards-setting bodies such as the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) and the Science-Based Targets Network (SBTN) provide frameworks and guidelines for businesses to measure, disclose, and manage their impacts on nature. TNFD helps companies assess and report nature-related risks and opportunities, driving transparency and accountability. SBTN sets clear, science-based targets for nature, guiding businesses in aligning their practices with broader environmental standards such as the GBF or EU regulatory requirements. From a sectoral perspective, examples of standards bodies include [organic certification](#) and bio-labelling, the [Global Sustainable Tourism Council Destination Standard](#), and [Forest Stewardship Council certification](#).

At an international level, standardisation development organisations include the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). These organisations provide a voluntary consensus-based international standards system for global trade. At an EU level, this consists of the European



Committee for Standardization (CEN), the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC), and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI). CEN and CENELEC are actively involved in [developing standards](#) to support the integration of NbS across Europe.

Nature

The economy is wholly embedded within nature, drawing on ecosystems for raw materials, energy, water, and climate regulation. These represent nature's contributions to people or ecosystem services, which underpin all forms of production and consumption. Every business, regardless of sector, ultimately depends on nature, whether directly through agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, or indirectly through supply chains reliant on healthy ecosystems and stable climate conditions. Nature shapes the economy through creating clear signals that we are exiting the safe operating space for humans, which result in events such as supply chain disruption, droughts, and flooding affecting crop yield.

Nature can be recognized as an actor through legal instruments such as rights-of-nature laws that establish legal rights for species or ecosystems. Rights-of-nature laws have been enacted in countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia, India, New Zealand, Uganda, Panama, Spain, as well as US and Canadian localities (Epstein et al., 2023; O'Donnell & Talbot-Jones, 2018). Prominent examples include the Ecuador constitution (2008) where Article 71 sets out the rights of nature, or Pachamama, and where the state has the obligation to take measures to prevent species extinction, ecosystem destruction, and permanent alteration of natural cycles. This law has been used to challenge mining activities in Ecuador's ecologically valuable Los Cedros cloud

forest, leading to the constitutional court recognising the forest as a rights-holder and declaring mining permits void as it violated the forest's right to exist (Epstein et al., 2023).

4.2.3 Actors who encourage accountability

Citizens and local communities

Civil society actors are important agents of change in sustainability transitions through community-led initiatives in nature conservation (Buijs et al., 2023). Indigenous Peoples are stewards for a considerable proportion of remaining biodiversity worldwide and hold invaluable traditional ecological knowledge (Garnett et al., 2018). Local communities often access nature for recreation, food, and wellbeing, and care about the health of their local environments. Actors who are close to nature, such as farmers, indigenous peoples and local communities, should be recognized and rewarded as stewards of nature for sustainable management.

Women and girls are key actors in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as they hold unique knowledge relevant to nature, which stems from societal expectations of gender norms that influence women's roles in agriculture, resource management, and community leadership (UN Women, 2018). Youth groups are important actors in conservation and climate action, both as a source of inspiration and as engaged in youth-led climate movements to hold decision-makers accountable. Faith-based organisations, trade unions, and social movements can help to promote sustainable values and engage citizens from different groups of communities across society (Gosnell et al., 2025). The media is also involved in monitoring, accountability, awareness raising and



shaping public opinion.

Non-governmental organisations

NGOs play a vital role in encouraging accountability of governments and businesses to meet their nature-positive commitments. NGOs monitor the interpretation of Nature Positive actions to avoid poor implementation and undesired outcomes (e.g., risk of greenwashing). Educators are critical to co-create initiatives that improve public nature literacy and foster a deeper understanding and commitment to biodiversity conservation across all of society. Education and training programmes focused on restoration techniques, sustainable land management, and conservation science are essential, creating new opportunities for educational institutions and NGOs to contribute to this growing field.

Researchers and education providers

Researchers and academics can provide input and guidance on nature-positive commitments that are evidence-based, scientifically robust, and socially just. Researchers are also often involved in education programs, which could include sustainability topics and improve environmental literacy for all of society. Education providers, such as schools and universities can contribute by embedding biodiversity and sustainability education, training the next generation of leaders and professionals to prioritise human-nature connections (see Section 4.5.3).

Cross-actor collaboration

For a NPE to be effective, it is essential that all stakeholders adopt an integrated and collaborative approach. Actions at a single sector or scale may not be sufficient to achieve a net positive impact on nature; multi-sector collaboration and coordination

at different levels (local, regional and global) is critical. Coalitions of actors and actor groups are more effective for transformative change, such as community-supported agriculture models in which consumers directly support local farmers (IPBES, 2024c). This requires a redefinition of responsibilities and strategies in each sector to ensure accountability and that all efforts are aligned with the common goal of environmental regeneration (Box 6). There are opportunities to connect top-down and bottom-up approaches, as well as scale out citizen-led initiatives.



Box 6. What accountability mechanisms can be included in a Nature-Positive Economy?

As outlined by earth system governance scholars, accountability has four elements: (1) a normative element that is a standard of behaviour defined with sufficient precision; (2) a relational element, linking those who are held accountable to those who have the right to hold to account; (3) a decision element that is a judgment of those actors who may hold other actors accountable about whether the expected standard of behaviour has been met; and finally (4) a behavioural element that allows the governing actor to sanction deviant behaviour of those held accountable (Biermann & Gupta, 2011). All elements need to be present in sufficient degree to make any accountability relationship meaningful.

In the context of the NPE, the **normative element** of accountability can consist of nature-positive commitments substantiated with a measured biodiversity baseline, timeframes, targets, monitoring, and disclosure (Milner-Gulland, 2022). Clarity is needed on metrics to ensure that nature recovery targets are measurable and achievable, which has informed NPI's work on building consensus for on a universal set of metrics to [measure the state of nature](#).

The **relational element** depends on governance arrangements, which could be member states held accountable for the Global Biodiversity Framework to the Convention on Biological Diversity or organizations pledging NP commitments through networks such as Nature Positive Universities or Business for Nature.

In terms of the **decision element**, a typology of nature-positive commitments helps to clarify ambitions and the extent to which commitments have been met. Scholars have outlined categories of high ambition and low understanding; misdirected focus; and incremental and evidence based outcomes (Simmonds et al., 2024). Mandatory requirements can also be set by governments to develop, disclose, and implement Nature Positive transition plans (Groot et al., 2024). The EU Business and Biodiversity Platform (2022) has outlined 10 core principles of Nature Positive for businesses and financial institutions to comply with so that their nature positive strategy credibly contributes to the Global Goal for Nature. Standards bodies can establish industry standards such as [Roadmaps to Nature Positive](#) (WBCSD, 2024) and [nature-related assessments and disclosures](#) (TNFD, 2023c; UNEP-WCMC & UNEP FI, 2025). Sector-specific guidance also exist, such as the financial sector (Finance for Biodiversity Foundation & UNEP, 2024; WEF, 2025) or [forestry and agricultural supply chains](#) (Accountability Framework initiative, 2023). Moreover, as Nature Positive is a societal goal, collective action is needed. Actors and organisations can measure their contributions to the nature-positive transition (Baggaley et al., 2023; White et al., 2024).

With the **behavioural element**, a shift in views and values of reconnecting to nature would create new societal norms to prioritise human-nature connections. In terms of multilateral agreements, inspiration can be drawn from review mechanisms, such as how compliance is assessed in the climate change framework or human rights domain (Higham et al., 2021; Koh et al., 2021). While penalties are usually issued for non-compliance with nature regulation, consideration is needed as to whether the agency responsible for enacting said penalties is supported effectively (Groot et al., 2024). Accountability mechanisms will only be effective if agencies have sufficient resources to fulfil their oversight functions and clear regulatory processes.



4.3 Scale

In the systems thinking literature, scale is often categorized into spatial and temporal dimensions (Monat & Gannon, 2015). Actions in a NPE span spatial scales from landscape to global, and temporal scales from short- to long-term.

4.3.1 Spatial scale

Nature-positive actions at both local and regional scales are essential for aligning actions and policies at a specific location with broader societal goals such as the GBF and the Nature Positive Initiative's Global Goal for Nature (IUCN, 2023). Governance of ecosystems should be facilitated at the local level to ensure that decisions are made at the lowest level appropriate while acknowledging the global context (Martino et al., 2023). Interlinked local-global dynamics mean that actions at the local

scale impact wider global scales; effective measurement and accountability require considering all interacting species, habitats, and ecosystems processes.

At the global scale, the NPE may require an equitable translation to country-level contributions based on different states of ecosystem degradation (Maron et al., 2020). This would range from Net Gain in countries where there is a low proportion of natural ecosystems remaining, to Managed Net Loss in countries with extensive natural ecosystems and a stronger need to improve social foundations (see Figure 13). Moreover, the NPE would benefit from global commons governance that considers the impact of international trade on nature with global cooperation and policy alignment. Global net-zero roadmaps have been developed by the International Energy Agency (International Energy Agency, 2023), this could also be done for nature positive.

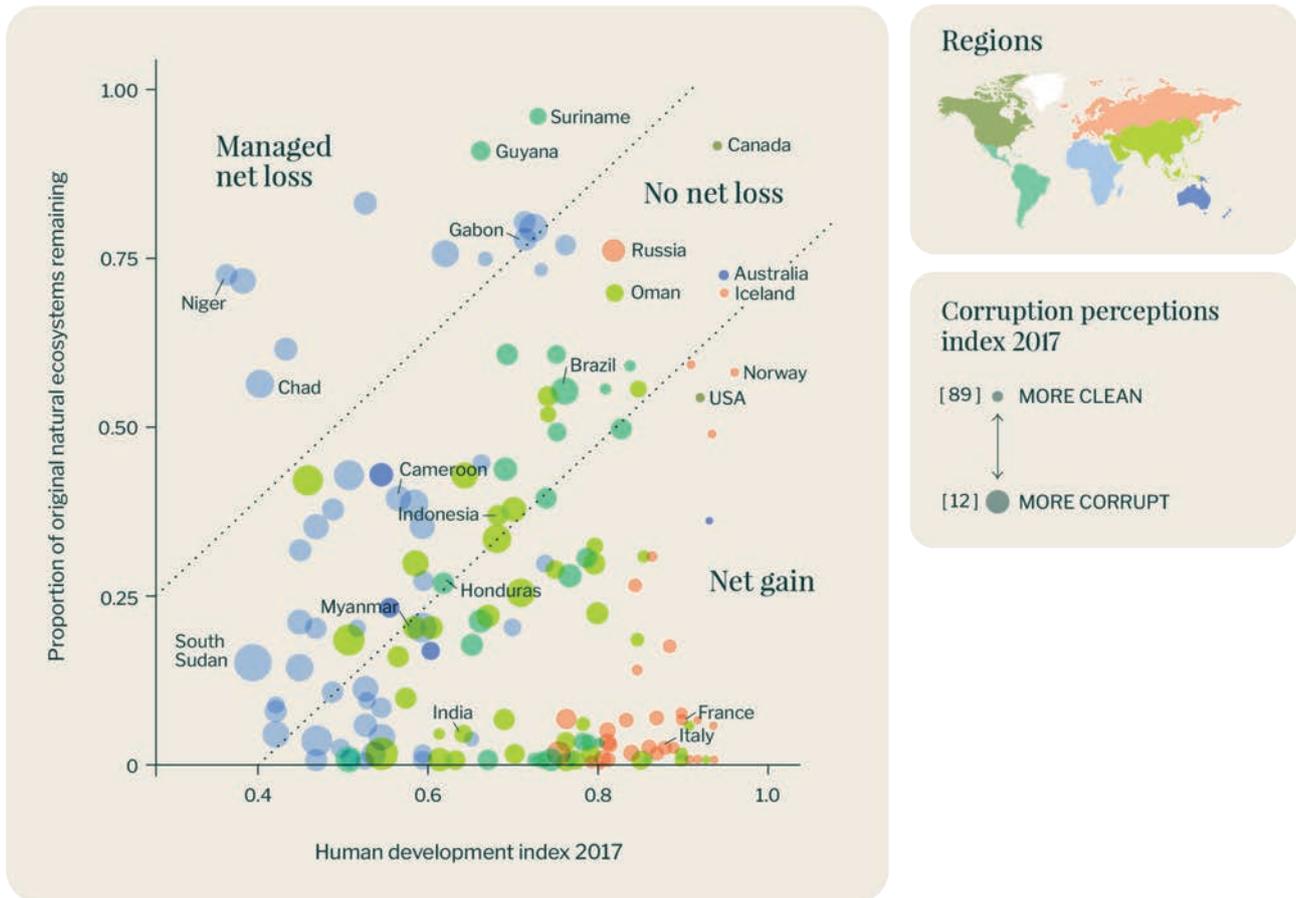


Figure 13. Minimum country-level contributions to achievement of Global No Net Loss with consideration for human development. Under a Global No Net Loss goal, managed net loss might be acceptable in countries where the imperative for human development is greatest, but high Human Development Index countries should commit to at least no net loss to avoid shifting the burden of restoring ecosystems to countries with a lower Human Development Index. Bubble size reflects the Corruption Perceptions Index (2017) for each country as an indicator to examine how variation in a country's socioeconomic factors potentially affect its capacity to contribute to a global goal.

Source: GoNPI, adapted from Maron et al. (2020)



At **regional** and national levels, a holistic planning perspective is needed where governments can design their economic policies with a mix of economic instruments that are consistent with a NPE such as Do No Harm, Create additional nature (e.g., restoration), and Disclosure of non-financial performance (Groot et al., 2024). Key instruments for implementation at the national level include NBSAPs and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for climate action. Nature-based Solutions are also a critical component of spatially oriented initiatives, as they enhance ecosystem services and biodiversity into urban planning, landscape management, and conservation efforts. Regional development economic planning can also integrate nature-positive approaches into their action plans and strategies.

Global population has urbanised rapidly since the 1950s to reach today an estimated 55% of the world population with global projections indicating an increase to 68% by 2050 (UN, 2019). Europe is the most urbanised continent with close to 75% of the population already living in urban areas (idem) and urban areas cover 22% of the land surface of the EU (European Parliament and the Council, 2024). The EU urban population is expected to increase to 83% by 2050 (UN, 2019). With strong population growth, cities tend to encroach on surrounding landscapes and to densify resulting in an increase in artificial, sealed surfaces for new roads, pathways, squares and buildings. Sealed surfaces in cities tend to grow proportionately more than the growth in urban population. Within cities, this means losing valuable green and blue infrastructure and associated ecosystem services that help regulate climate impacts of urban heat islands and flood events, reduce pollution and provide amenities necessary for physical and mental wellbeing; in short, the loss of green and blue infrastructure reduces the liveability

of cities. The EU Soil Strategy (EC, 2021) aims to stop net land take at the EU level by 2030 and the EU Nature Restoration Regulation (European Parliament and the Council, 2024) requires that there is no net loss in the total national area of urban green space and of urban tree canopy cover in urban ecosystem areas by 2030 and from 2031 an increasing trend of urban green space and urban tree canopy cover until a satisfactory level has been reached.

At a **city level**, the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2024) outlines three key actions specifically for cities: (i) Commit to act to the benefit of nature and leave it in a better state than it was before, both within and beyond their own city boundaries; (ii) Translate this commitment into formal objectives and clear science-based targets tailored to their context, detailed in a nature strategy that also addresses the required enablers; and (iii) Implement actions to deliver on set targets, and monitor and report on their impact.

At the **local scale**, the foundation of the NPE is to first mitigate negative impacts and eventually achieve sustainable use. This consists of conducting an environmental impact assessment alongside a mitigation hierarchy of direct operational impacts (Bull et al., 2013). Frameworks such as the AR3T and Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy help to address impacts at the local scale (Milner-Gulland et al., 2021; SBTN, 2020) (see Section 4.1). Both frameworks begin with Avoidance, Minimising, and Regenerating/Restoring nature:

- **Avoid impacts:** Prevent impacts from happening in the first place such as avoid developments in Key Biodiversity Areas or ecologically valuable areas (Koh et al., 2017);
- **Minimise:** Spatial and temporal impacts.
- **Regenerate:** Take actions within existing land uses to increase biophysical function and/or ecological productivity of an



ecosystem, often with a focus on a few specific ecosystem services or nature's contributions to people.

- Restore: Initiate or accelerate ecosystem recovery with respect to its health, integrity, and sustainability, with a focus on permanent changes in state
- Transform underlying systems in which companies are embedded to address the drivers of nature loss: Take actions contributing to system-wide change, notably to alter the drivers of nature loss, e.g. through technological, economic, institutional, and social factors and changes in underlying values and behaviours

Beyond direct operational impacts, frameworks such as the Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy (MCH) provide guidance on considering full value chains (Milner-Gulland et al., 2021). The MCH can be applied by any stakeholder group seeking to account for their biodiversity losses and gains, from multilateral or national levels to local areas, individuals or groups. Notably, EU guidance also aligns with ideas of local scale and system scale integrity by stating that negative impacts in one part of the value chain cannot be compensated by positive impacts in other parts of the value chain (EU Business and Biodiversity Platform, 2022). This extends to financial institutions as well, where negative impacts in one part of a portfolio cannot be compensated by positive impacts in other parts of the portfolio. Companies should set boundaries for assessing their impacts as per industry guidance.

Furthermore, an **integrated landscape approach** helps to overcome siloed sectoral approaches and deal with competing land uses (e.g., housing, infrastructure, food security, climate, biodiversity priorities) (EPA Ireland, 2023; Pettorelli et al., 2024). Landscape approaches considers the integration of the sectors, supply chains, and stakeholders interests in a landscape

or seascape (PBL Netherlands, 2022). One example of guidance is the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development that manages system boundaries and trade-offs, which helps to assess interventions before investments are made, and offers the possibility for more effective collaboration across sectors, regions, value-chains and stakeholder groups (Broman & Robèrt, 2017).

For companies with site-based impacts (direct operations), a landscape approach consists of screening corporate interventions across portfolio of sites, such as their upstream supply chains, and identifying potential sites for nature-positive outcomes (Baggaley et al., 2023; IUCN, 2023). This includes conducting a spatial biodiversity footprint analysis and developing a landscape-scale mitigation hierarchy of actions, including threat abatement for ongoing threats in area of control (e.g. by changing company operations), and compensatory threat abatement and restoration in a wider impact landscape.

A coordinated NP approach across spatial and sectoral scales is needed for effective outcomes, whereby national nature-positive pathways can help provide a national vision and guide the actions of actors across local, regional, and landscape levels (Aviva & WWF UK, 2024).



Box 7. Dealing with trade-offs of nature-negative and nature-positive activities.

Several decision-making frameworks are being developed to deal with trade-offs of nature-negative and nature-positive activities, depending on the scale of analysis.

At a **landscape** scale, one example is SBTN's landscape approach to corporate nature targets, which involves engaging with and improving ecological conditions in key landscapes within a company's value chain. Their [Landscape Engagement target](#) includes indicators such as land use, land use change, and soil pollution. Another example of guidance is the [Integrated Landscape Management](#) that emphasizes partnerships and long-term collaboration among multiple stakeholders (EcoAgriculture Partners, 2022).

At a **national** scale, the [UN System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Ecosystem Accounting \(SEEA EA\)](#) provides an international standard for natural capital accounting that focuses on ecosystems as units, considering extent, condition, services and monetary valuation of ecosystem services and assets. It has the potential to produce a quantitative overview of environmental information for a broad range of policies (Vardon et al., 2018). However, ecosystem accounting focuses on instrumental values with less functionality for intrinsic or relational values, which does not capture the diverse values of nature. Moreover, ecosystem accounting can support both weak and strong sustainability perspectives (Comte et al., 2022). If a weak sustainability approach is followed where substitutability between ecosystem and other capital types is allowed, ecosystem accounting risks reinforcing a nature-negative economy.

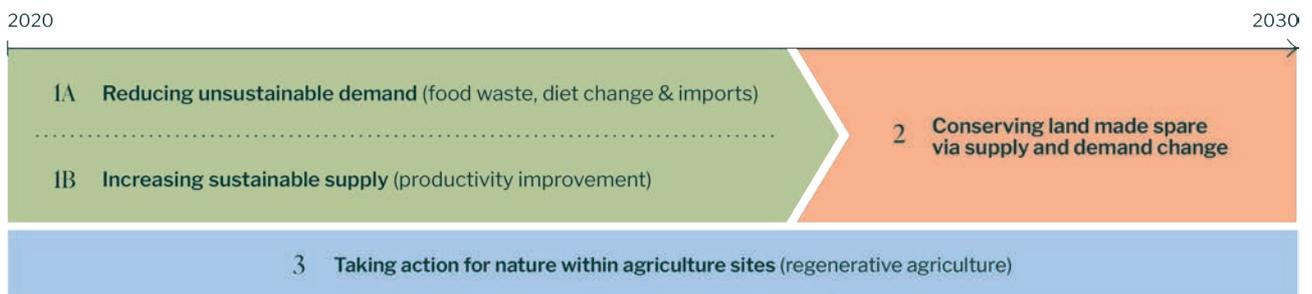
At a **national and sectoral** scale, the Aviva & WWF UK (2024) report on “National Nature-Positive Pathways to guide policy and private sector action” demonstrates the need for national sectoral pathways to deliver the nature-positive goals set out in the Global Biodiversity Framework. National Nature-Positive Sectoral Pathways are national strategies that will guide policymakers and the private sector on how different economic sectors should contribute towards the GBF targets and the country's NBSAP – by 2030 and beyond. These should be integrated with existing sectoral pathways to net zero and explicitly consider the trade-offs between objectives to set out a country's transition to a nature-positive, net-zero economy.

At a **sectoral** scale such as agriculture, this involves creating space for nature's recovery both on and off farmland. This also means minimising the potential negative nature impacts – and maximising positive nature impacts – of ongoing agricultural practices. The figure below presents the UK agriculture sector's potential contribution to economy-wide GBF targets (Aviva & WWF UK, 2024). The nature-positive targets are the relevant GBF targets that the sector must contribute to by 2030, against a 2020 baseline, and the levers needed to align with the targets.



Nature-Positive Targets	2020 UK Baseline	Agriculture Contribution	2030 UK Outcomes
T1-3 Place 30% of land under conservation for nature.	~5% UK land under conservation.	Agriculture on 71% of land, will contribute most to 30x30.	30% UK land under conservation.
T7 Halve nutrient and pesticide pollution.	5.5mg/l of nitrates in waterways.	Agriculture causes 60% of nitrates in England's freshwater.	2.3mg/l of nitrates in waterways.
T16 Halve food waste.	12.8m tonnes of farm food waste.	Agriculture wastes 3.3m tonnes of food per year.	6.4m tonnes of farm food waste.
T18 Identify & eliminate nature-harming subsidies.	No gov. policy to identify nature harming subsidies.	Majority of agriculture subsidies do not account for nature.	£0 spent on nature harmful subsidies.

Sector levers to Nature-Positive



At a **company** level, the EU Business and Biodiversity Platform (2022) recommends that nature-positive commitments should apply to the entire value chain, which consists of upstream, direct operations, and downstream. A company should demonstrate nature-positive outcomes within their sphere of influence. One common challenge with evidencing outcomes is the lack of precise data on sourcing locations in a supply chain, whereby companies can collaborate with its stakeholders to promote transparency in supply chains. Moreover, positive impacts need to outweigh negative impacts in each part of the value chain and in all these parts, the net balance needs to be positive. Corporate natural capital accounting techniques can be used as a method of balancing impacts per nature component (EU Business and Biodiversity Platform, 2022).

There are also potential **synergies**, as the IPBES Nexus assessment identified 71 response options that can help advance the sustainable management of biodiversity, water, food, health, and climate change (IPBES, 2024a). These options involve different actors and sectors, spatial and temporal scales, and feasibility levels that can be adapted to different national and local circumstances. They represent a menu of options that can be applied in different contexts.



Scholars outline three types of actions that companies can conduct for transformative change: private actions, social-signalling actions, and collective actions for transformative change (Figure 14) (Booth et al., 2024). Private actions are those that a company privately conducts to reduce its own impacts on nature. Social signalling are actions that a company conducts to publicly signal its opinions and position on biodiversity loss. Such actions can

contribute to changing social norms. Collective actions are those that companies engage in collectively, with the intention of changing laws, policies, institutions, sectors, infrastructure, and technology. These actions can drive broader system change and indirectly influence individual behaviours of many other companies in up- and downstream value chains through system changes (e.g., new policies, institutions, infrastructures, and practices).

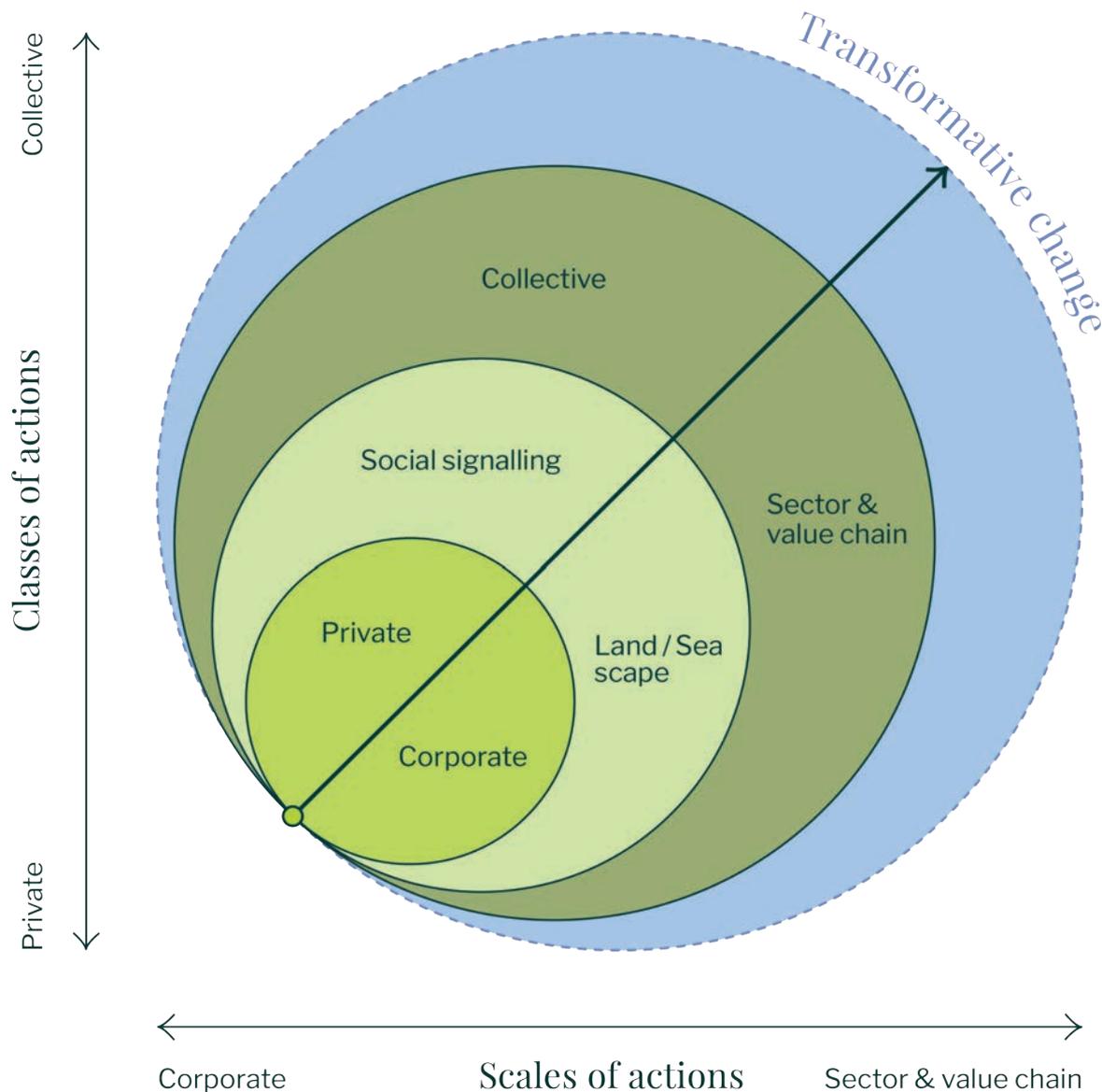


Figure 14. A conceptual diagram of expanding classes and scales of actions, which businesses can implement along with other actors to create change at a societal scale. Source: GoNPI, based on Booth et al. (2024).



4.3.2 Temporal scale

Nature-positive actions are needed across immediate, medium- and long-term timelines. The IPBES Transformative Change assessment found that while the timeframe needed for transformative processes can vary from a few years to centuries, positive environmental and social consequences can become evident quickly. Most initiatives with transformative impacts on social-ecological systems had positive outcomes within a decade or less (IPBES, 2024c).

As discussed, the NPE would deliver net gains for nature until a degree of nature recovery has been achieved, after which

it would reach a stable state of a global nature-neutral economy. Given alignment with the GBF and associated definitions for NP, the temporal scale in question is full nature recovery by 2050, with net outcomes evaluated against a 2020 baseline and ideally with a reference state. A reference state is often used within ecological restoration science as an important complement to the baseline, by providing context to inform ecological meaningfulness and directionality of change (Luxton et al., 2024) (Figure 15). In the EU context, this could refer to the [EU Nature Restoration Regulation’s](#) “satisfactory levels” that are set by the Member States through an open and effective process and assessment, based on the latest scientific evidence.

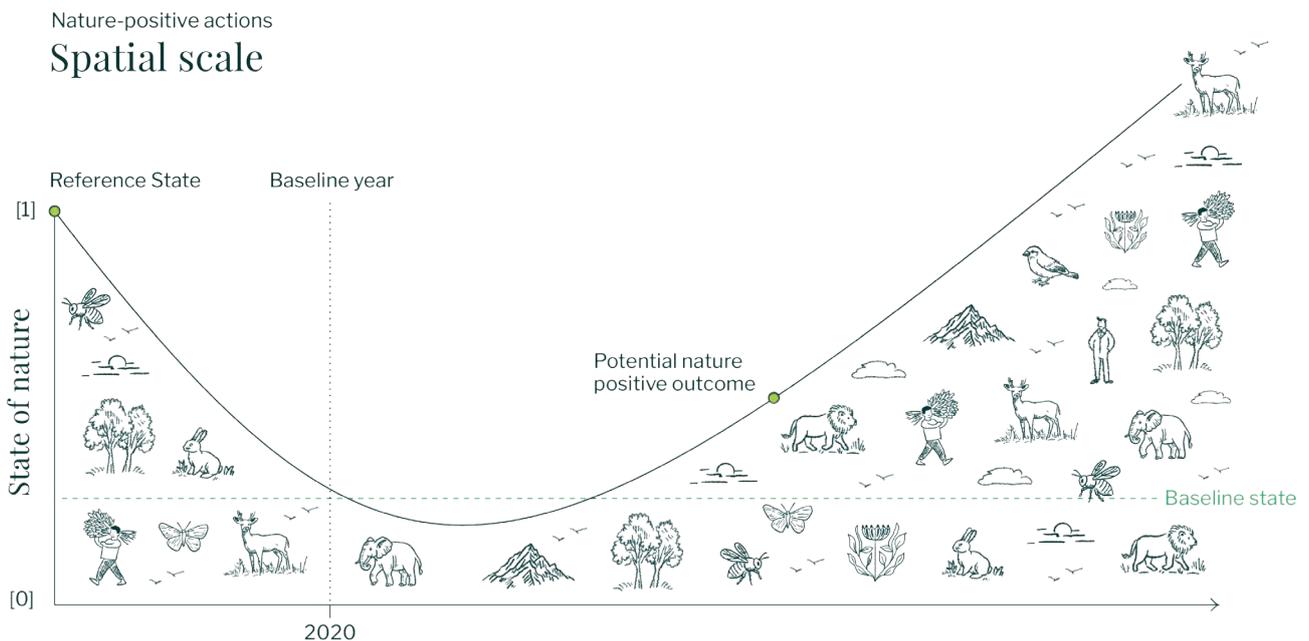


Figure 15. A reference state that describes the state of nature in ideal health, condition or integrity, with baseline year of 2020 and nature-positive outcomes. Source: GoNPI, based on Luxton et al. (2024)



The necessary **immediate** activities up to 2030 are outlined in the targets of the GBF. This includes reducing activities and associated subsidies that have a negative impact on nature, transitioning away from environmentally damaging economic activities, and for governments to implement NbS alongside other restoration and regenerative activities.

Medium-term activities would consist of further embedding industry guidelines into national policies, as well as moving the private sector towards adopting nature-positive approaches, business models and nature-based solutions throughout their activities. This also includes a focus on decarbonization of the energy sector and transitioning away from fossil fuels (in line with the Paris Agreement on climate change). The transition to net zero has made significant progress with a roadmap to identify building blocks of economic governance reforms and regulation of private sector activities. There are opportunities to integrate nature into these reforms and ensure the net zero transition is also nature positive so that climate-biodiversity crises are addressed simultaneously (WWF, 2022).

In the **long-term** up to 2050 and beyond, achieving NP outcomes requires systemic changes of the dominant economic models underpinning global society. As discussed in Section 3, the NPE describes any economy that results in a net increase for nature. This could range from operationalising doughnut economics to more profound shifts such as post-growth or degrowth trajectories. There are current examples of real-world economies that have applied economic models that shift away from the extractive and profit-driven linear economy. For instance, there has been an increasing number of purpose-driven businesses and nature-based enterprises, across diverse geographies and sectors of the economy,

that prioritise social benefit and ecological regeneration (Hinton, 2020, 2021; Hurth & Vrettos, 2021). In particular, circular economy thinking in Germany has led to community-led renewable energy projects, while the Aloha 'Āina concept in Hawai'i that describes a relationship of kinship between people and the environment has informed circular systems of intensive farming and aquaculture (Beamer et al., 2021). Education has a key role to play in fostering human-nature connections in current and future generations of living in harmony with nature.

The concept of a Nature-Positive Economy is a transitional state that seeks to restore nature. Ultimately, the goal would be to reach a steady state of a “nature-neutral economy” in which a sustainable balance in the use of natural resources is maintained without causing net biodiversity losses. Ideally, this would be to reach a situation where nature has been sufficiently restored so that negative impacts are adequately minimised and compensated for, allowing for long-term sustainable use.

The “end state” of a NPE would be a point of stability where economic systems do not generate further degradation but operate in a regenerative way that respects planetary boundaries. In this scenario, nature-based solutions and nature-based enterprises will have played a key role in restoring ecosystems. Once this state is reached, the economy would operate under principles of continued strong sustainability, and global agreements could be put in place to manage any acceptable level of biodiversity loss, limiting the impact on nature. Permitted biodiversity losses should ideally be compensated for, with regional management of biodiversity on an ecoregion basis to ensure ecological equivalence between losses and gains (BBOP, 2012b; Maron et al., 2020). Policies that move beyond economic growth include resource caps, resource sanctuaries, limits



to large infrastructures, redistributive green taxation, work reduction schemes, agroecological development, and compact urban planning (Otero et al., 2020).

Inspiration can also be drawn from examples of Indigenous economies that have operated over thousands of years, with common characteristics of an economy of regional scale and connectivity to ecological processes of their surrounding landscape (Johnston, 2022). There are also examples of economies operating on principles other than capital accumulation and individualism, demonstrating that an international economy is possible outside capitalist relationships. This includes alternatives to development, such as *buen vivir*, a culture of life with different names and varieties in South America; Ubuntu with its emphasis on human mutuality in parts of Africa; Swaraj with a focus on self-reliance and self-governance in India, the wellbeing economy, solidarity economy, food and energy sovereignty initiatives (Demaria & Kothari, 2017; IPBES, 2022).

4.4 Sectors

The NPE applies an integrated holistic approach in economic policy so that the net result of all economic activities combined leads to an absolute increase in nature – net nature positive across all sectors, rather than individual actions focused on one specific sector. A NPE framing is needed where targets and timeframes are defined for actions to improve positive and reduce negative impacts across sectors, with consistent metrics to measure and aggregate outcomes. Governments or other appropriate actors would then monitor and aggregate nature-positive and nature-negative contributions from each sector to ensure that they are in line with sectoral and national targets (IUCN, 2023) (e.g., [Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ Framework](#)). Ideally, these sectoral targets

would be situated within a framework that balances nature-positive and nature-negative sectors to arrive at a net nature-positive. The aim would be to restructure incentives so that harmful sectors would be less profitable, such as redirecting environmentally harmful subsidies and encourage investments in sustainable practices (Selomane et al., 2025; UNEP, 2023).

Deciding upon how we measure net nature-positive is an important issue (see Box 7). Guidance for examining nature-positive alignment has been developed by the IUCN (2023), WWF (2022), and the EU Commission (2022).

From a **cross-sectoral** perspective, the IPBES Nexus assessment highlights that there are highly synergistic response options that have significant positive impacts on biodiversity and broadly positive impacts on water, food, health, and climate change (IPBES, 2024b). These response options include agroecology, nature-based solutions, integrated landscape and seascape approaches, which are already available to actors in multiple sectors.

From a **sectoral** perspective, some of the higher-impact sectors for nature include those with large spatial footprints (e.g., agriculture, forestry, fisheries), widespread infrastructure (e.g. energy, transport, built environment) and extractive activities (e.g., mining). Extensive measures will likely be necessary for most sectors to bring their impacts within planetary limits. In the energy sector, shifts away from more carbon intensive sources are already targeted by global climate agreements; with additional considerations that arise in relation to managing impacts on nature more broadly, such as those linked to mining impacts in the supply chain for renewable energy generation (Sonter et al., 2020). Widespread and systematic biodiversity impact mitigation,



including careful spatial planning to avoid development where necessary, will be required in relation to built infrastructure (zu Ermgassen et al., 2019).

For priority actions on major sectors, organisations such as [Business for Nature](#) and [TNFD](#) provide comprehensive sector-specific nature-positive guidance for over 15 sectors (Victurine et al., 2024). The [World Economic Forum's Nature Positive Transitions](#) series identifies actions for sectors such as automotive, chemical, cement and concrete, house and personal products, mining and metals, offshore wind and port sectors. WWF-US outlines nature-positive pathways in ocean sectors such as offshore wind, coastal and marine tourism, shipping and seafood (WWF, 2025). The actions of all these established high-impact sectors are crucial in realising a NPE.

In the GoNP! project, we focus on sectors related to our pilot partners that have strong direct impacts and dependencies on nature – agri-food systems, built environment, forestry, tourism and the blue economy. We discuss the agriculture sector below, more details on each sector are available in [our sectoral briefs that highlight how key economic sectors can contribute to a NPE](#).

Agriculture

In agriculture, measures include dietary shifts on the part of consumers, agro-ecological farming models on the part of producers and a reduction of food losses along the whole food chain (Business for Nature, 2024b; Poore & Nemecek, 2018; Springmann et al., 2018). From a governance perspective, WWF-UK and Aviva have developed guidance on national sectoral pathways to deliver the nature-positive goal with the case of agriculture (Aviva & WWF UK, 2024) (Box 7). This outlines a clear set of sectoral pathways

that would enable businesses and financial institutions to better understand how they can align with and support the goals of the GBF. The report suggests actions including Reducing unsustainable demand (food waste, diet change & imports); Increasing sustainable supply (productivity improvement); Conserving land made spare via supply and demand change; and Taking action for nature within agriculture sites (regenerative agriculture).

From a business perspective, the European Business and Biodiversity Platform (2022) provides guidance for small-medium enterprises in the agri-food value chain to understand their company's position in the value chain with its direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity (Figure 16). All companies can then conduct their own impact assessment to understand how they can decrease their footprint and increase their positive impact. The guide helps SMEs to navigate the landscape of existing tools and guidance on biodiversity management. A focus on biodiversity will enable SMEs in the agri-food sector increase their resilience to nature shocks, thereby enabling competitiveness (see Box 8).

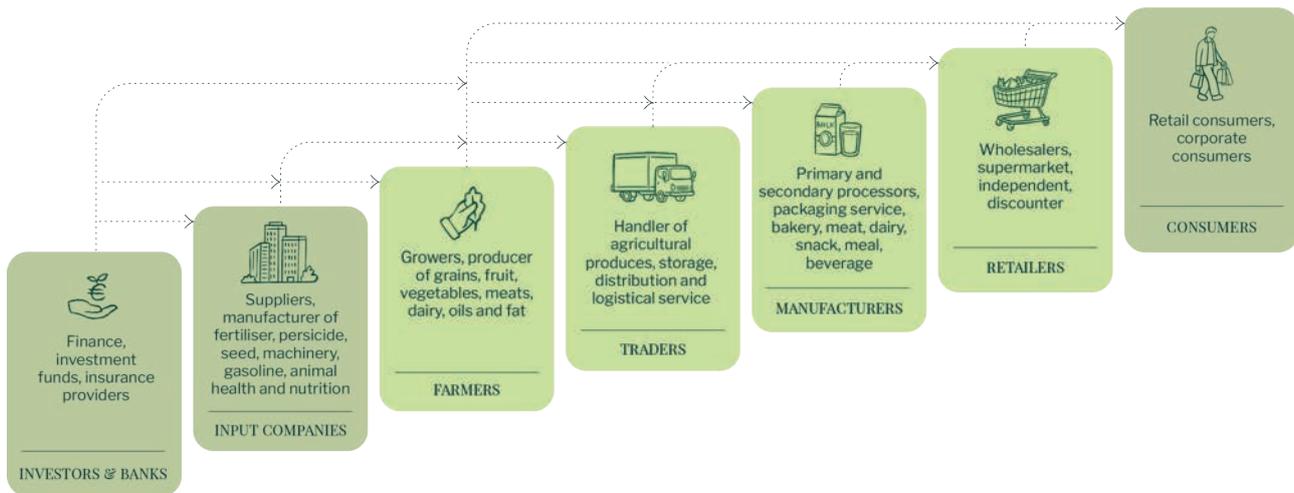


Figure 16. Actors in the agri-food value chain.

Source: GoNPI, based on the European Business and Biodiversity Platform (2022)

From a food systems perspective (i.e., production, distribution, and consumption), there are three pillars of nature-positive food systems to protect, sustainably manage, and restore agro-ecosystems (Hodson De Jaramillo et al., 2023). Scholars note the need for agroecology and diversification practices to regenerate the ecosystem functions and services both from and to agriculture, while reducing its negative impacts, notably, habitat loss and pollution of soil and water (DeClerck et al. 2023).

Efforts have been made over decades to adjust the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) so that it provides more support for nature. The CAP has tools that could support a NPE, including mandatory “conditionality” requirements for all CAP beneficiaries (e.g., wetland protection) and voluntary subsidies for nature-positive actions in the form of “eco-schemes”. However, conflicting interests and an

insufficient focus on restoration hinder its transformative potential (Kupilas et al., 2025). Studies have found that the current CAP for 2023-2027 does not match the EU’s ambitions for the climate and the environment, and that key elements for assessing green performance are missing (e.g., [Report of European Court of Auditors, 2024](#)).

Greater inclusion and recognition is needed of farmers and farming communities as key actors in food production, climate resilience, and biodiversity (DeClerck et al., 2023). To achieve international and European biodiversity targets, farms play a crucial role to realise NbS on the field.

Moreover, the agricultural sector consists largely of family farms. As small operators, their position within the food supply chain is vulnerable compared to bigger and stronger actors in the chain because they have insufficient bargaining power. At the



same time, they feel overwhelmed with all kinds of requirements and administration by regional and European policies. To engage farmers, the first thing needed is inspiring practical examples of fellow farmers realising NBS in their fields and being successful, both at ecological as socio-economic level. Policies are needed to support nature restoration measures with incentives and reward mechanisms that pose little financial risk to farmers. These issues were highlighted in the [2024 Strategic Dialogue on the future of EU agriculture](#), with key recommendations to strengthen farmers' position in the food value chain, prepare a Common Agricultural Policy that provides socio-economic support targeted to the farmers who need it most, and promote nature-positive outcomes for society.

Diversified farming systems are a critical strategy for mitigation and restoration (DeClerck et al., 2023). Investing in nature-positive or circular production systems, which can prevent waste and leakage while supporting reuse, agroecological systems, complex rotations, and mixed farming are straightforward investment options. Approaches to diversify production systems include:

- Urgent investments in undervalued crops and cropping systems, notably, underproduced crops that underpin dietary health.
- Greater investment in tools, technologies and enabling environments that amplify and/or complement biodiversity's contribution to agriculture, rather than seeking to replace it.
- Repurpose public funds in agriculture to support farmers producing public goods, including the production of healthy foods, carbon capture, clean water and habitat for biodiversity.

Focusing on a food consumption perspective, Taylor et al. (2023) outline

nature-positive targets for an organisation through (i) Identifying a baseline of biodiversity impacts; (ii) Establishing SMART targets for levels of biodiversity impact from food consumption; (iii) Suggesting Actions as per the Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy; and (iv) Exploring strategies for impact mitigation.

Nature-based enterprises

Nature-based enterprises are enterprises for which nature retention and/or restoration is a core element of their product or service (EU Commission, 2022b; Kooijman et al., 2021). NbE are expected to become a larger component of multiple sectors under the NPE, in service of overall nature recovery. Examples include those that work based on agroecology and regenerative forestry/blue economy cf. the GoNPI pilot projects, those focused on green or blue infrastructure development, and those offering ecotourism services. Impact reduction and mitigation in major sectors such as agriculture and energy will be an indispensable foundation for the NPE - but without adequate investment and support for the establishment and widespread operation of NbE, net-positive outcomes for nature will not be feasible.

Technology and innovation

In a NPE, advances in technology must be guided by an overarching goal of nature recovery. Technical progress has been recognised for decades as a key driver of economic growth (Solow, 1968). Technology influences the rate and orientation of growth. Technical progress in turn draws in part on research while the impetus can be magnified through innovation. Research and development as well as efforts to pursue innovation require tangible immediate costs while the benefits tend to be uncertain, more long-term and partly diffused on many hands.



For such reasons, markets account for under-investment in technical progress. This problem is exacerbated by “green” research and development and innovation, due to the relatively long-term and highly diffused benefits of the value streams of nature. Addressing these issues is essential for realising the NPE. Technical progress is critical for enabling higher efficiency and the enactment of less polluting production processes as well as products, along with reduced resource use and reuse. The essential mechanisms include increased resource efficiency, cleaner production processes, and more sustainable consumption patterns (OECD, 2011).

Advanced technologies can support the NPE in multiple ways. Satellites, drones, distributed computing, smart apps, AI, etc., enable dramatically improved measurement, monitoring and verification of ecological impacts, optimising resources and creating new solutions that benefit both nature and the economy. More efficient and environmentally friendly energy systems, water management, agriculture and food management, transport and logistics solutions, building material and construction, are just some of the many areas and strands of activities that stand to benefit from enhanced mobilisation of technology and innovation in support of a NPE. There are opportunities for data-driven approaches and advanced tools for designing complex NbS systems.

There is a need for comprehensive datasets and sophisticated analytical tools that can identify and capitalise on potential synergies across different sectors and scales. This data-centric approach would not only support more informed decision-making but also help in maximising the positive impacts of NbS interventions. Improved data collection, analysis, and modelling capabilities could contribute to the successful implementation of the NPE.

Innovation plays a critical role in fostering green entrepreneurship, new business models, and generating sustainable jobs. It drives the experimentation, piloting, and scaling of green technologies that align with evolving user needs. Green start-ups are vital in this process, as they act as pioneers in testing solutions that contribute to environmental sustainability while building viable business opportunities (Gibbs, 2009; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011).

Opportunities in a NPE

While the nature crisis exposes significant dependencies, impacts, and risks on nature, the NPE also presents opportunities. For example, “The transition to a nature-positive economy could create 395 million jobs by 2030” (WEF, 2020). Table 3 presents a mapping of certain sectors, dependencies, and risks, with opportunities in a NPE. Box 8 demonstrates a case study of a new market opportunity in a NPE.



Table 3. Mapping of certain sectors, dependencies, and risks, with the opportunities in a Nature-Positive Economy.

Sectors	Dependencies	Risks from nature	Opportunities in a NPE
Agri-food	Pollination	Decline in species and less pollination resulting in lower productivity, increased costs from artificial pollination	New market opportunities in some sectors:
Tourism	Water quantity and quality		
Blue economy	Soil fertility	Invasive species resulting in crop failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green/blue infrastructure, sustainable urban planning (green roofs/walls, natural water management systems). Public-private partnerships (PPPs) in urban greening and restoration projects.
Forestry	Erosion control		
Built infrastructure	Climate regulation	Decrease in soil quality resulting in decrease in productivity and nutrient quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable construction, water management technologies, landscape architecture
	Pollution removal		
	Nutrient cycling	Decline of water quality and quantity resulting in decrease in productivity or even harvest failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture: continued shift towards sustainable regenerative practices that enhance soil health and biodiversity (agroecology, organic farming, resilient crop varieties)
	Wood, food, fibre		
	Pollination	Diseases resulting in harvest and production failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecosystem services markets, ecotourism
	Recreation		
	Biodiversity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance: Innovative financial mechanisms such as biodiversity-linked loans and green bonds that incentivize private sector investment in biodiversity-positive projects. Competitive advantage by positioning as early adopters and industry leaders Business-led marketing efforts to attract environmentally-conscious consumers Build long-term resilience to future shocks Increase resource efficiency



Box 8. New market opportunities in a Nature-Positive Economy: The case of Cafeology.

A NPE presents opportunities for new markets with nature-positive business models. [Cafeology](#) demonstrates an example of a business that gained competitive advantage as an industry leader of bird-friendly farming practices with a reduced likelihood of deforestation.

Formed in 2003, Cafeology is a small coffee roaster based in the UK. Cafeology sources a bird-friendly shade-grown coffee to supply to the UK hospitality and catering market. Their unique selling point is product purity; the coffee is organic and grown in sufficient shade to maintain maximum biodiversity. The coffee is sourced directly from producers in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras. Cultivated under the shade of tropical canopies, the coffee is farmed in a way that protects rainforest, encourages migratory birds to flourish and improves growers' livelihoods. Research by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center in Peru found that while a sunny plantation harbours just 61 species of birds, this number jumps to 243 when coffee is cultivated under a canopy of ten tree species or more.

As a small and medium-sized enterprise, Cafeology examined their supply chain to ensure their coffee is produced in an environmentally responsible manner with Fairtrade certification and accreditation from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center Bird Friendly Habitat. In areas of their supply chain where they were unable to directly control but able to influence, they chose to work with supply partners that align to their core principles in relation to ethical sourcing and sustainability.

Cafeology found a niche in the premium coffee market and tapped into the commercial potential for biodiversity-responsible coffee. Cafeology also increased their resilience: as demand increases, so will the awareness of the scale of the commercial opportunity here. In the past ten years, the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center has seen a fivefold increase in area of land cultivating certified bird-friendly coffee.

Source: (European Business and Biodiversity Platform, 2022)



4.5 Social wellbeing

Social wellbeing and quality of life are dependent on nature, and are important elements of a NPE. The key principles to guide deliberate transformative change in support of social wellbeing are Equity and justice, Pluralism and inclusion, Respectful and reciprocal human-nature relationships, and Adaptive learning and action (IPBES, 2024c).

These principles are a precondition for systemic transformation to a nature-positive economy that prioritises social wellbeing alongside nature restoration.

4.5.1 Equity and justice

Equity entails ensuring a fair distribution of benefits and responsibilities. This should be assessed in the distribution of benefits and impacts across social groups, such as urban and rural; Global North and South; youth and future generations. Environmental policies must engage with issues of equity, fairness, and justice to be effective, or they risk reinforcing existing power inequities at the expense of local communities and the Global South (Leach et al., 2018; McDermott et al., 2023). Environmental justice and equity frameworks of procedural, recognitional, and distributional justice can help to frame interventions (Bernstein et al., 2020; Leach et al., 2018; McDermott et al., 2013).

Economic activities and regulatory policies may impact the differing ways in which local actors use and depend on nature. Examples of this include the 2018 yellow vest protests during the introduction of carbon taxes in France and the 2024 farmers' protests during the EU Nature Restoration Regulation discussions in

Europe. Processes are needed to address identified unequal impacts with particular attention given to marginalised and highly nature dependent groups (White et al., 2024a; Zu Ermgassen et al., 2022). From a global perspective, corporate due diligence policies such as the EU Deforestation-free Regulation, have been critiqued for reinforcing inequities in global trade. Monitoring frameworks for equity can be applied to unilateral value chain and trade-based policies (McDermott et al., 2025).

Justice involves correcting historical and structural inequalities. Learnings can be drawn from the justice implications of a Net Zero transition such as the need for good governance and inclusion, reducing vulnerability, and citizen engagement (Malakar et al., 2024; Upham et al., 2022).

Ecological reparations represent one strategy for global justice, which includes debt cancellation, unconditional cash transfers, funding climate adaptation, loss and damage, and more (Schmelzer & Nowshin, 2023). Direct funding can be channelled into indigenous-led organisations for initiatives spanning environment, education, health, and human rights (IFIP, 2024).

In terms of international environmental agreements, principles of fair allocation to avoid biodiversity impacts can be used in biodiversity decision-making to deliver procedural and distributive justice alongside biodiversity outcomes (Booth et al., 2024). These principles are grounded in longstanding theories of justice and are mathematically operationalizable.

These principles have been applied in agreements such as the International Seabed Authority's divide-and-choose to allocate deep-seabed mining sites, and the CBD's proportionality for fair and equitable benefit sharing from digital sequencing information.



4.5.2 Pluralism and inclusion

Pluralism and inclusion refer to valuing diverse worldviews, knowledge systems, and stakeholder participation in decision-making. Navigating transformations towards a just and sustainable future requires inclusive participation of diverse stakeholders (Raymond et al., 2023). This involves recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, integrating traditional ecological knowledge into decision-making, and respect for their customary governance. As power dynamics between stakeholders may arise, discussion platforms can be established that facilitate multiple ways of knowing, empowering IPLC through effective and meaningful representation in decision-making processes (Chausson et al., 2024) (see Boxes 9 and 10).

Social **inclusion** is an important factor for transformative change, with the need for more effective and proactive citizens' involvement and social dialogue to build the consensus. As 'net' nature positive entails certain components of nature will be reduced, there is therefore a need for more inclusive methods to allow for deliberative views on which aspects of nature loss are acceptable to society as a whole (Turnhout, 2018). This involves questions such as i.e., who decides which nature can be lost? What nature should be restored, and where? Methods include a citizens' assembly such as in Ireland on climate change and on biodiversity loss (Devaney et al., 2020; Shúilleabháin et al., 2023).

Constructive engagement with citizens and society at large is essential for realising a NPE, as outlined in the GBF with the whole-of-society approach that emphasizes gender and rights. Meaningful stakeholder engagement entails recognizing diverse worldviews values held by stakeholders,

rights-holders, and knowledge-holders for long-term collaboration and co-creation of solutions to conserve and sustainably use nature (IPBES, 2022). This involves the recognition of the rights of IPLCs, the integration of traditional ecological knowledge into decision-making, and respect for their customary governance (Box 10).

A NPE must respect international human rights obligations, as laid out in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). Binding international instruments that protect collective rights of people include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention against All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the American Convention on Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the International Labour Organization's Convention on the rights of Indigenous and tribal peoples (Newing et al., 2024). Best practice guidelines include the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#), as well as rights-based approaches to conserve, restore, and share the benefits arising from the use of nature and biodiversity (Boyd & Keene, 2021; Hertz et al., 2023).

Inclusion of gender-responsive approaches entails that women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to participate and provide their input into decision-making, in line with Targets 22 and 23 of the GBF. This includes the use of gender-sensitive indicators that are relevant to several GBF targets ([CBD/WG2020/3/INF/10](#)). Women's empowerment can be promoted in entrepreneurial opportunities of nature-based supply chains and sectors, which is in line with the [CBD's Gender Plan of Action](#).

Non-human worldviews can be incorporated by recognising the rights of Nature and granting legal rights to the



natural world and enforcement rights to affected communities. For instance, the Bolivian and Ecuadorian Constitutions, as well as several cities in the US, have implemented ordinances that uphold the rights of nature (Borràs, 2016). Legal rights for rivers have also been recognized in Australia, New Zealand, and India, with multi-stakeholder and community representatives on governance structures to manage the rivers (O'Donnell & Talbot-Jones, 2018).

4.5.3 Respectful and reciprocal human-nature relationships

Respectful and reciprocal human-nature relationships refer to mutual care between people and nature. This entails the recognition of humans as a part of nature, moving away from instrumentalized relationships of extraction and exploitation of nature and towards fostering values of care, respect, solidarity, responsibility and stewardship (IPBES, 2024b). Education and learning processes play a critical role to foster eco-literacy and active engagement in sustainability practices. Environmental education can facilitate an inner transformation of human potential to care and effect change for a more sustainable life (Ives et al., 2018, 2023; Wamsler et al., 2024). This can be targeted at younger generations through incorporating human-nature connectedness into educational curriculum as well as collective learning through participation in nature conservation projects (Giusti, 2019; Giusti et al., 2018). There are also actionable options to foster nature connectedness across the public realm through green spaces in cities and urban planning (Frantzeskaki et al., 2022; Shaikh & Hamel, 2023).

Furthermore, the recognition of humanity's dependence on nature and reciprocal human-nature connectedness is found in

the worldviews of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities all over the world, such as *satoyama* in Japan (Indrawan et al., 2014), *ukama* from the Shona people of Africa (Ikeke, 2015), *yindymarra* of the Wiradjuri people of Australia (Sullivan et al., 2016). Acknowledging this connection forms the basis of processes and actions for restoring and regenerating nature. Fostering connections with nature and sharing this with current and future generations is key to shifting societal views to prioritise human-nature relationships and getting to the stable state of living in harmony with nature (Kimmerer, 2013).

From an economy perspective, the private sector is beginning to recognise and assess their dependencies on nature through disclosure frameworks such as TNFD, SBTN, and CSRD (Box 10). Research in sustainable production of coffee and, in establishing a circular economy more broadly, has found sustainable supply chains as one entry point to enable a transformation in mindsets and values through collective learning, across individuals, sectors and the broader systems (Beamer et al., 2021; Hochachka, 2021; Hofstetter et al., 2021).

4.5.4 Adaptive learning and action

Adaptive learning and action focus on the process of change - to embrace flexibility, learn from experience, and adjust strategies as conditions evolve. Processes for ongoing learning and adaptation are particularly important for managing trade-offs (Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2021), such as between nature-negative and nature-positive activities.

This is where pluralism and inclusion of diverse actors is important, to ensure that all relevant stakeholders and forms of knowledge are involved in the deliberation

on which components of nature loss are acceptable to society as a whole.

As the NPE consists of a whole-of-society approach, this requires self-reflection and engagement from a wide range of actors, across in all sectors, and at all relevant scales necessary to assess their own

nature-positive contributions.

This calls for evaluative frameworks that go beyond top-down metrics to include bottom-up approaches of locally relevant indicators, as well as to support empowerment, participation and reflection amongst stakeholders (see Section 5).





Box 9. What safeguards are needed in a Nature-Positive Economy?

Safeguards are systems an organisation may put in place to prevent negative environmental or social impacts, occurring as a consequence of its work (Newing et al., 2024). Safeguards are widely used in development finance institutions from organisations such as the [World Bank](#) and [International Finance Corporation](#) in their environmental and social policies. Safeguards are also often used in the context of biodiversity financing mechanisms such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) to address a range of environmental and social issues including respect for indigenous peoples and local communities, public participation and protection of biodiversity (McDermott et al., 2012). Within EU policy frameworks, the '[Do No Significant Harm](#)' principle aims to ensure that initiatives do not have negative impacts on climate and environmental objectives.

In a NPE, safeguards are particularly relevant in the contested discussions around market instruments such as biodiversity credits, where academics emphasize the need to avoid similar mistakes made in carbon and offset markets as organisations are developing guidelines for 'high integrity' credits (International Advisory Panel on Biodiversity Credits, 2024; The Biodiversity Consultancy, 2022; Wunder et al., 2024). Zu Ermgassen et al. (2025) outline five golden rules for nature markets: proxy correlates with outcome; assume non-additionality; assess and manage leakage; ensure independent verification; and long-term compliance and enforcement.

The NPE involves a whole of society approach with a diversity of actors that bridges the worlds of biodiversity and business. Collaboration is also needed with human rights and conservation groups where there are established tools for respecting rights such as social safeguards, FPIC, grievance mechanisms, as well as access to remedies and restitutions (Newing et al., 2024). The Accountability Framework (2020) outlines operational guidance for companies to fulfil their obligations on Free, Prior, and Informed Consent processes in their operations and supply chains. While further work is needed in this area, engaging with the IPBES principles to guide transformative change represents a step towards strengthening the social considerations of a NPE.



Box 10. How can we bridge indigenous and local knowledge with the Nature-Positive Economy?

Embracing Indigenous and Local knowledge (ILK) and processes of knowledge co-creation fosters transformative change for a just and sustainable world (IPBES, 2024c). Target 21 of the GBF explicitly recognises the role of ILK in guiding biodiversity governance.

As the NPE concept continues to evolve, bridging ILK into the NPE remains as an emerging research area. Insights can be drawn from the more established NbS literature, where the following criteria were identified to assess how ILK is included in NbS: validation (acceptance and co-production); integration (decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation); and protection (knowledge sharing protocols, defined roles and responsibilities, and a formal interface to mediate disputes) (Cottrell, 2022). The principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent must be adhered to, as specified in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

From an industry perspective, guidance is being developed by TNFD on how to engage with and recognize the knowledge and potential contributions of IPLC who are affected by company activities and value chains (TNFD, 2023a). Just partnerships between the financial sector and IPLCs can be strengthened by adopting a rights-based approach, integrating traditional knowledge, protecting environmental human rights defenders, ensuring data sovereignty, and improving direct access to finance (UNEP FI, 2025).

These principles and emerging frameworks provide concrete opportunities to embed ILK more meaningfully within NPE initiatives. For instance, ecosystem restoration efforts highlight the potential for equitable partnerships with IPLCs, who are stewards of many of the world's most biodiverse areas. Evidence shows that conservation outcomes are more successful when IPLCs have equal partnership or primary governance roles (Dawson et al., 2024; Garnett et al., 2018).

Finally, IPLC must be recognized not only as partners in conservation but also as equal partners in the value chain (Frantzeskaki et al., 2025; Narain et al., 2022). Benefit-sharing policies can be established for products derived from biodiversity and Traditional Ecological Knowledge to return a percentage of the proceeds to their stewards and custodians, as well as co-ownership arrangements (Astolfi et al., 2025; Meyer & Naicker, 2023).



Photo: GoNaturePositive!



5. Measuring progress towards the Nature-Positive Economy

It is essential to measure progress towards the Nature-Positive Economy to foster effective action and avoid greenwashing (Marco-Fondevila & Álvarez-Etxeberria, 2023; Smith et al., 2019; White et al., 2023).

Several private and public initiatives are available to assess impacts on and the state of nature, commit to science-based targets, disclose progress, as well as transform systems and operations to reduce harm and regenerate nature.

Typically, these frameworks are designed to support particular actors (e.g., governments, companies, corporations, financial institutions) at particular scales, from site-specific to national scales.

However, no single actor can claim to be 'nature-positive' in isolation, it is rather how they contribute to the transition to a nature-positive economy (Baggaley et al., 2023). In contrast, existing frameworks tend to be specialized for a specific actor type (e.g., large corporations) and focus on a limited number of aspects (e.g., state of nature).

While this makes them valuable state-of-the-art frameworks for specific actors and use cases, it also means they may overlook important aspects of a NPE for which progress should be measured.

These important aspects, as discussed at length in this concept note, can be summarised as follows:

1. There needs to be a **net increase in nature, to the point of full recovery**.
2. **Transformation of our current economic systems** for nature and equity is required to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss.
3. **Actions** needed to operationalise the NPE:
 - a. Negative impacts on nature should be reduced.
 - b. Nature-positive actions should be increased.
 - c. Transformative change should be enacted.
4. All **actors** have a role to play in the transition to a NPE.
5. Nature-positive actions are needed across all **scales**.
6. All **sectors** should be accounted for in a net nature-positive approach.
7. **Social well-being and equity** should improve in parallel with nature recovery.
8. Economic **growth** may occur in industry sectors and activities that are well **aligned with planetary boundaries**. Trade-offs must be measured.



Therefore, within the GoNP! project, an integrated framework is developed that is applicable in all sectors and can be used by all actors to assess their contribution towards the Nature-Positive Economy.

This framework firmly builds on the definition and framing of the NPE provided in this Concept Note. It uses a whole-of-society approach and integrates not only ecological, but also societal and economic dimensions, within a strong sustainability vision. The framework guides the selection of scale-, actor- and sector-specific indicators and metrics covering all the important aspects of the NPE, either through what is measured or how it is operationalized. Operationalizing the NPE needs to be done by multiple actors, at multiple scales and in all sectors.

It is impossible to create one set of indicators to measure progress that can be applied in all of these contexts. Therefore, the GoNP! measurement framework is meant to be made operational through translating it to the specific context, as will be done within the pilots of the project itself. Nonetheless, it is imperative that translations of the framework still measure the important aspects of the NPE, which will be ensured through a comprehensive set of “guiding principles”.

Through our GoNP! measurement framework, existing indicators and metrics can be combined in a coherent framework to promote an economic paradigm that centres restored ecological conditions and increased human wellbeing. In this way, our framework can build on a broad number of existing initiatives such as the NPI’s State of Nature Metrics which seek to develop credible and practical metrics for nature-positive outcomes. In the same line, voluntary frameworks for enterprises such as SBTN, TNFD, NPI, GRI, and CDP provide a solid basis to assess, disclose and address their impacts on nature, providing

necessary signals to financial institutions and consumers. The framework also builds on initiatives like the Economy for the Common Good and Donut Action Lab which have guidance for businesses that goes beyond their impacts on nature and include economic and social metrics as well.

For the public sector, a wide range of indicators and metrics are available to embed nature into decision-making, from SEEA natural capital accounts to beyond GDP indicators (Liu et al., 2024), which can be brought together through our framework.

As such, it can include metrics that measure current wellbeing, the distribution of wellbeing, and conditions affecting future wellbeing (Jansen et al., 2024). Economic indicators are available that incorporate unaccounted social and ecological values and costs, such as the Genuine Progress Indicator, the Indicator of Sustainable Economic Welfare, Gross Ecosystem Product, natural capital accounting, the Sustainable Development Index, and Inclusive Wealth (Martin et al., 2024; Wageningen Economic Research et al., 2024).

This includes indicators that capture measures of wellbeing such as Gross National Happiness, Sustainable Wellbeing Index (Costanza et al., 2016), the Socio-Environmental Index (Rigal, 2022) or the Living Standards Framework (New Zealand Government, 2021).



Photo: GoNaturePositive!



6. Next steps for the GoNaturePositive! project

In summary, transforming to a Nature-Positive Economy is not just an environmental imperative but a strategic necessity for long-term economic resilience as well as planetary and human wellbeing, security, and prosperity for all of society. As we face the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, a Nature-Positive Economy offers a pathway that ultimately serves the needs of all people as well as the planet itself.

conceptualisation and framing for a Nature-Positive Economy that can clarify and support policy-makers and governments, businesses, NGOs, civil society, researchers, and standard bodies in their work to decouple economic development from environmental degradation and create a sustainable economic pathway for future generations.

As part of Pillar One (2024 – 2025) of the GoNP! project, this Concept Note outlines a

This Concept Note further provides the framing and basis of analyses and activities across the GoNP! Project from Pillar One to Pillar Four (See Figure 17).

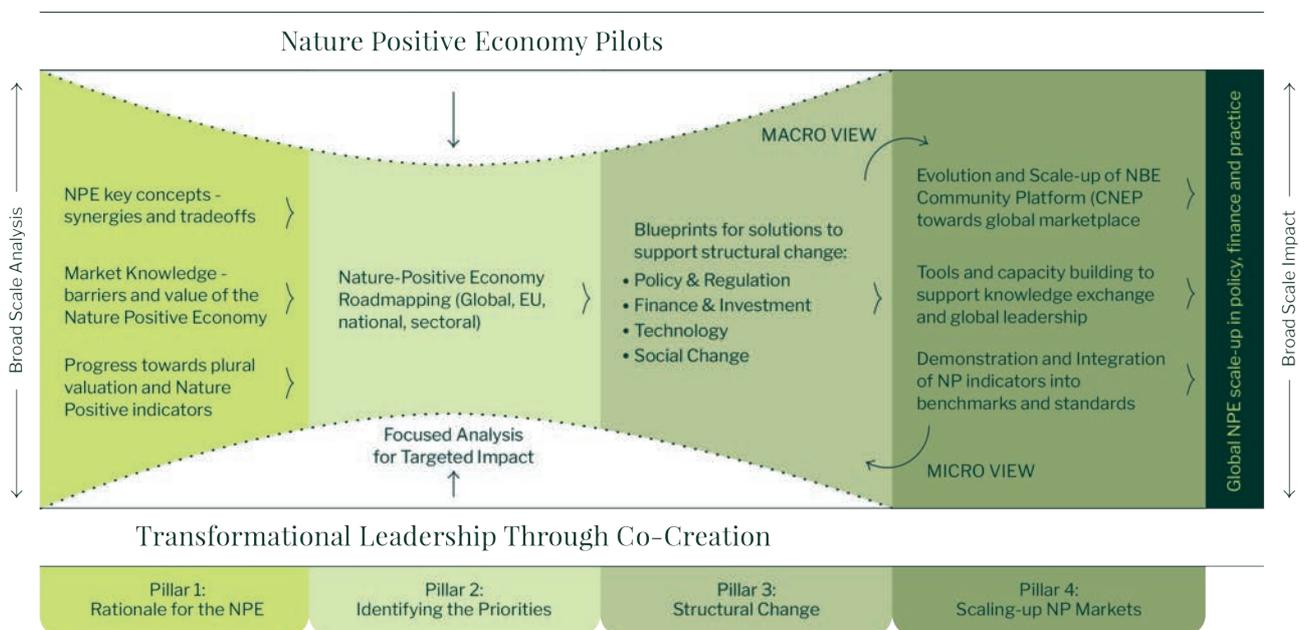


Figure 17. Overview of GoNP! methodology and connection across pillars.



The actions to operationalise the Nature-Positive Economy – reduce negative impacts on nature, increase positive impacts on nature and enact transformative change – provided the frame of analysis for Deliverable 1.3 ‘Mapping policy and co-operate initiative landscapes for systemic change towards a nature-positive economy’ (Kupilas et al., 2025) and associated five sector policy briefs. Deliverable 1.3 identified and analysed core policies, strategies and co-operative initiatives with regards to their alignment or conflict with systemic change in a NPE, as well as synergies and trade-offs between different policies.

This Concept Note also provided the basis for developing criteria and indicators for measuring progress towards a Nature-Positive Economy in Milestone 9 of ‘Guiding principles and a first set of indicators for measuring progress towards the NPE’ (forthcoming) and later in the project Deliverable 1.2 – ‘Guiding principles and a set of operational indicators for measuring progress towards a NPE’, planned for February 2027.

Compiling market evidence and insights on the extent to which Europe’s economy is Nature Positive builds on this concept (Deliverable 1.1) along with the development of criteria and indicators for measuring progress of indicators (Deliverable 1.3) producing a market report and data set repository – Deliverable 1.4 ‘State of the market report on NPE activities’ - planned

for February 2027.

In Pillar Two (2025 – 2028), GoNP! applies this Concept Note in the work to operationalise the NPE by demonstrating what it could look like on the ground in five EU pilots and one global pilot, in collaboration with businesses across five industry sectors (agri-food systems, built environment, forestry, tourism, and the blue economy) to show how NP practices can generate multiple benefits for people and planet while simultaneously reducing business risks and attracting increasingly biodiversity-aware investors. Pillar Two works towards identifying viable pathways for transitioning towards a Nature-Positive Economy and will produce NPE Roadmaps for each Pilot, Deliverable 2.2, planned for December 2025.

Pillar Three (2024 – 2028) bridges research and practice, researching, developing, and testing solutions that support structural change and scaling nature-positive markets, and Pillar Four seeks to scale-up NP markets through the Connecting Nature Enterprise Platform (CNEP), which provides tools and capacity building to support knowledge exchange and leadership, with the ambition to demonstrate and integrate NPE indicators into benchmarks and standards.

For more information and updates on the GoNaturePositive! project and forthcoming publications, we invite you to engage in our stakeholder engagement activities [here](#).



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Appendix

What is the purpose of the GoNaturePositive! project?

The GoNaturePositive! project is coordinated by Trinity College Dublin and involves 20 partners across 14 countries, represented by research institutions, non-profits and environmental organisations who are leading the nature-positive agenda at global and European levels. The project is funded through the EU Horizon Europe research programme. It runs from Jan 2024 for four years, and the first task was to conceptualise the ‘Nature-Positive Economy’.

The GoNaturePositive! team reviewed relevant literature and conducted workshops and focus groups to capture current knowledge and understanding of the term Nature-Positive Economy. This has led to a new conceptual framework that will help define the scope and content for future policy, strategy and practice. This concept note defines a conceptual framework for the NPE.

Methodology

The first stakeholder consultation was held on March 6th, 2024 in Dublin as part of the public launch of the GoNP! project. The first consultation explored the concept of Nature Positive, and what is meant by a NPE including an underpinning conceptual framework; descriptive, analytical, and normative aspects of the NPE; short- and

long-term dynamics; and multiple spatial scales (sectoral, national, EU, global). Approximately 70 people contributed to roundtable discussions, representing stakeholder groups of policy makers and the public sector; businesses; financing and investment organisations; nature-based enterprises; environmental organisations; citizens and community groups; and the research community. Gender-sensitive methods were incorporated into project methodologies to ensure balanced participation in all activities and to obtain input from women and men equally. Data was disaggregated by gender to better understand differences in gender and taken into account where relevant.

The second workshop was held online on June 21st, 2024, and explored the role of Nature-based Solutions in a nature-positive economy with internal GoNP! project partners and collaborators. The workshop built on discussions and themes identified from the NbS conference to:

- Examine the positioning of NbS in the broader context of the Nature-Positive Economy and other related concepts such as the Doughnut Economy (presented at the NbS conference).
- Develop a better understanding of the EU perspective on the NPE in the context of global supply chains and patterns of production and consumption.

A targeted review of policy documents, industry reports, and academic literature was conducted based on keywords and expert knowledge from the project consortium to identify standards, guidelines, and initiatives relevant to the NPE. A Scopus search was conducted on June 25th, 2024, with terms “Nature Positive” or “Nature-Positive Economy”. This was then filtered for relevant subject area, which resulted in 75 scientific articles.

Strict inclusion criteria were used to



ensure consistency in the type of resource selected for the literature review, such as:

- Provide guidance on ‘Nature Positive’, ‘nature-positive economy’, and other related economic concepts
- Be available in the English language
- Be publicly available
- Provide substantive guidance on at least one of the 10 principles for Nature Positive identified by EU Business and Biodiversity Platform (2022)

The final sample size of scientific articles and grey literature included approximately 130 papers. A content analysis of these documents was then conducted based on the following guiding questions:

- Does the paper discuss NP or NPE? Does it provide supporting information?
- What activities are used to operationalise the NPE?
- What policy instruments are used to operationalise the NPE?
- What regulations are relevant for the NPE?
- What is the role of technology in the NPE?
- Are the metrics used to quantify the NPE?
- Are any sectors targeted?
- What geographic scales are used?
- Is there a baseline? What future timeframe is noted?
- What actions are seen as contributing to (nature) positive?
- How is social wellbeing & equity addressed?

During October-December 2024, we held a global consultation process on a draft version of the Concept Note. Through targeted stakeholder workshops and a public consultation, over 750 individual responses were collected from stakeholders including policy, business, finance, nature-based enterprises, NGOs, citizens, research and standard

bodies. These responses were coded and grouped into similar themes (see section on ‘Summary of draft concept note consultation’).

Three major themes emerged from the feedback:

1. Dealing with trade-offs between nature-negative and nature-positive
2. Enhancing accountability and safeguards
3. Bridging Indigenous and Local Knowledge

To address these issues raised by stakeholders, we held two online internal workshops – one with project consortium partners (Feb 17th, 2025) and another with members of the project’s Impact Board (March 19th, 2025). Input from consortium partners and impact board members helped to scope out existing scientific literature and policy documents to address these issues, as well as identify knowledge gaps and future research areas. The consultation has thus shaped this final version of the concept note, where the main themes raised in the stakeholder feedback are addressed in boxes throughout the concept note.



Summary of draft concept note consultation

The GoNP ‘Framing the Nature-Positive Economy’ concept note consultation received over 750 individual responses from 50 countries.

1. Survey participants

Stakeholders across the 8 GoNP! target groups participated in the survey (Figure A1). All global regions were represented in the survey, as participants held nationalities across 50 countries (Figure A2). Participation of genders was approximately equal (Figure A3).

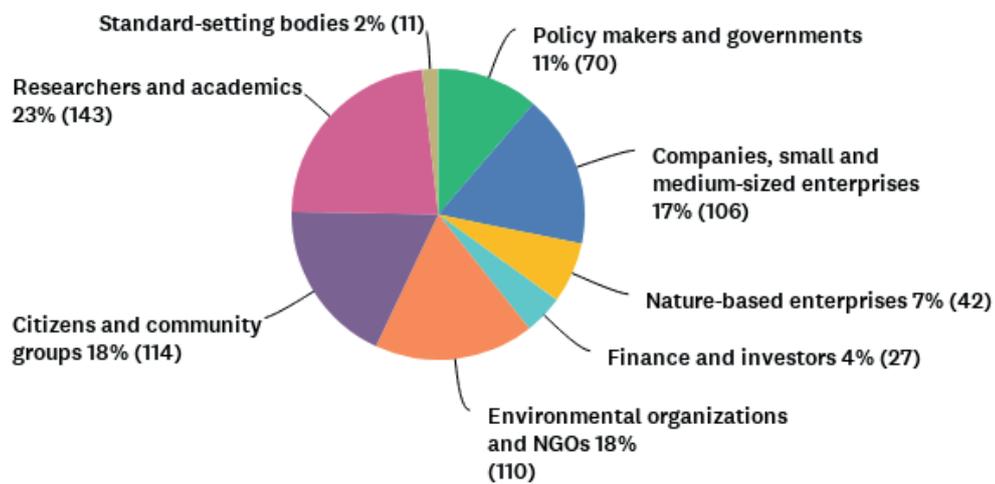


Figure A1. Stakeholder group breakdown extracted from SurveyMonkey.

Note that additional responses were received bilaterally beyond the survey that may not be reflected in this figure.

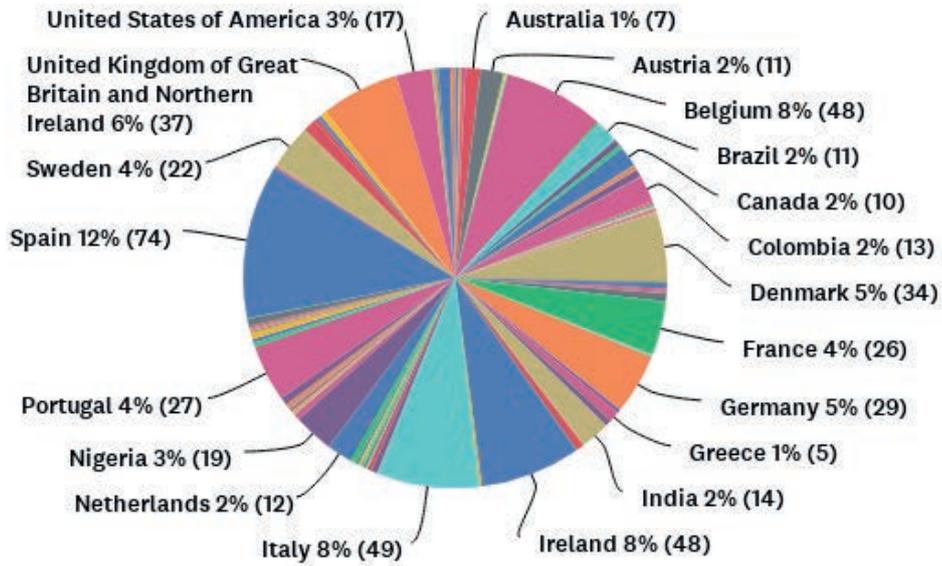


Figure A2. Nationality of survey respondents extracted from Surveymonkey.

Note that additional responses were received bilaterally beyond the survey that may not be reflected in this figure.

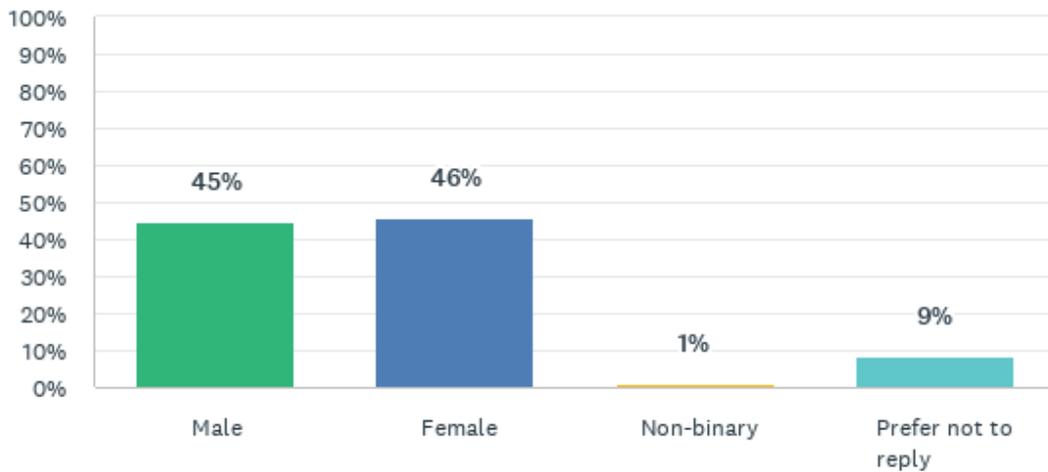


Figure A3. Gender of survey respondents extracted from Surveymonkey.

Note that additional responses were received bilaterally beyond the survey that may not be reflected in this figure.



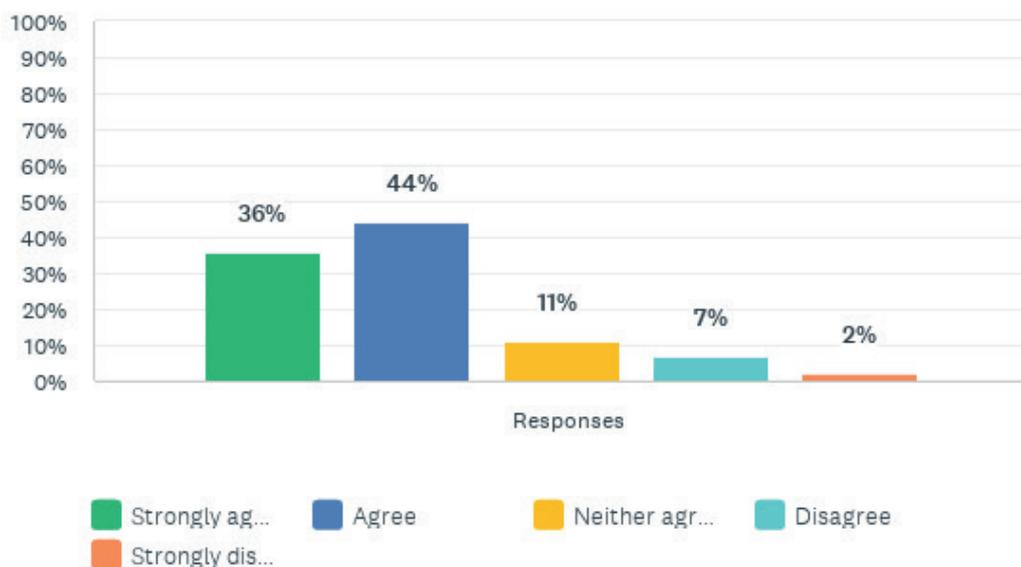
2. Definition of a Nature-Positive Economy

The consultation feedback on the definition of a NPE can be categorized into themes of:

- a. How do we justify and position the NPE amidst other economic concepts?
- b. What is the role of economic growth in a NPE?
- c. Is a 'net' approach to nature positive appropriate? Are there limits to commensurability of nature in a net approach?
- d. Clarification of terminology:
 - How is nature defined? How is an increase in nature measured?
 - What is full recovery of nature? How do we know if full recovery is reached?
 - What is a 'nature-negative' activity?

Box A1. Survey responses on the definition of a Nature-Positive Economy

1. We suggest: “A Nature-Positive Economy means that the net results of all economic activities combined, leads to an absolute increase in nature towards full recovery.” According to the Nature Positive Initiative, ‘Full recovery of nature’ means more nature in the world in 2030 than in 2020, followed by continued recovery. Do you agree or disagree with this proposed definition?

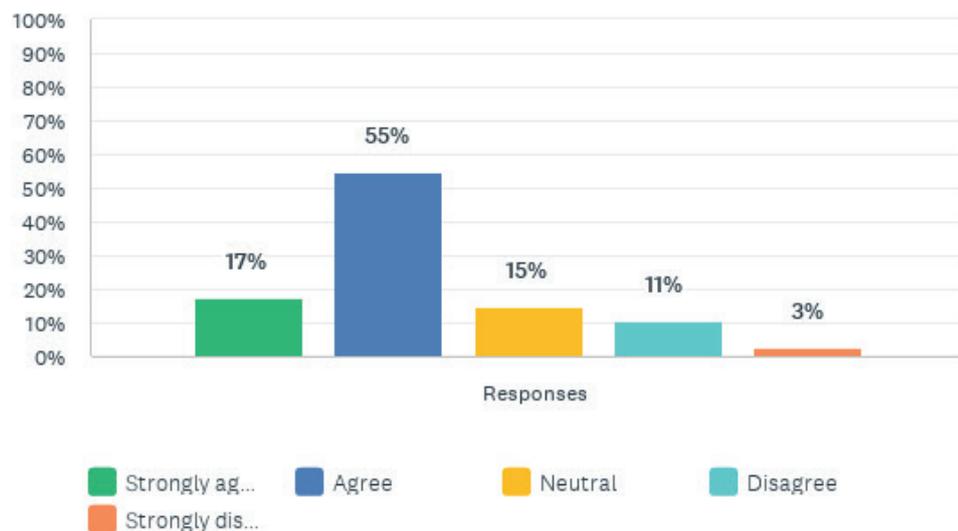




Participants who were critical of the definition cited concerns such as:

- Critical of a 'net approach', whereby an emphasis should be put on measuring in separate metrics destruction trends and restoration trends as both are not comparable
- Critical of the timeline as being either too ambitious or not ambitious enough
- Critical of a 'quantitative approach' to nature that does not cater for a diversity of nature's values
- Requested clarification of terms such as 'full recovery', 'nature', and 'increase in nature'
- Noted the definition as being too complicated and difficult to understand

2. Based on this definition of a Nature-Positive Economy, this means that some nature-negative economic activities may still occur as long as the combined outcome overall is nature positive. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

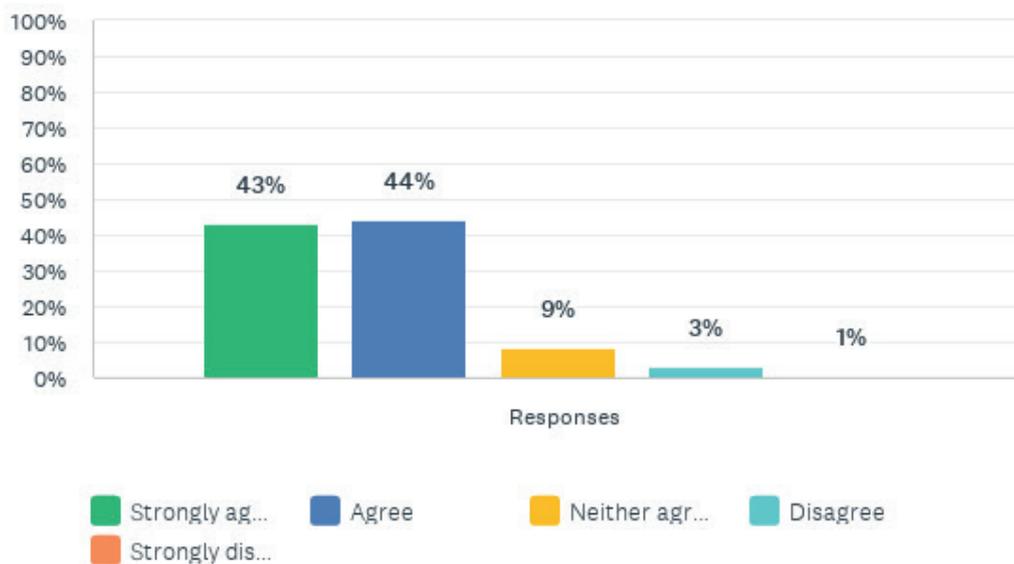




Participants who were critical of the statement cited concerns such as:

- Allowing “some nature-negative economic activities” may provide a loophole for harmful practices to continue under the justification of a net positive outcome. This can undermine the integrity of the nature-positive framework by permitting destructive activities as long as they are offset.
- Overlooking issues of power relations and justice, whereby companies and countries who have power and influence will still be able to continue business-as-usual in a NPE. Who defines which nature-negative activities can continue?
- Tradeoffs of nature-negative and nature-positive activities across sectors, national scale, and value chains.
- Emphasized that all economic activities must be nature-positive
- Risk of nature-positive being quantified at a snapshot in time, which hides cumulative and remote impacts.
- Highlighted concerns of the ‘substitutability of nature’ in a net approach
- Clarify terms of ‘nature-negative’

3. For a Nature-Positive Economy to operate, this means that businesses, governments, and other ACTORS take ACTIONS across multiple SCALES and SECTORS, aligning with SOCIETAL FACTORS to improve social-ecological wellbeing and equity. Do you agree?



Participants who were critical of the statement cited concerns such as:

- The definition being overly complicated, or already represented in previous sustainability literature



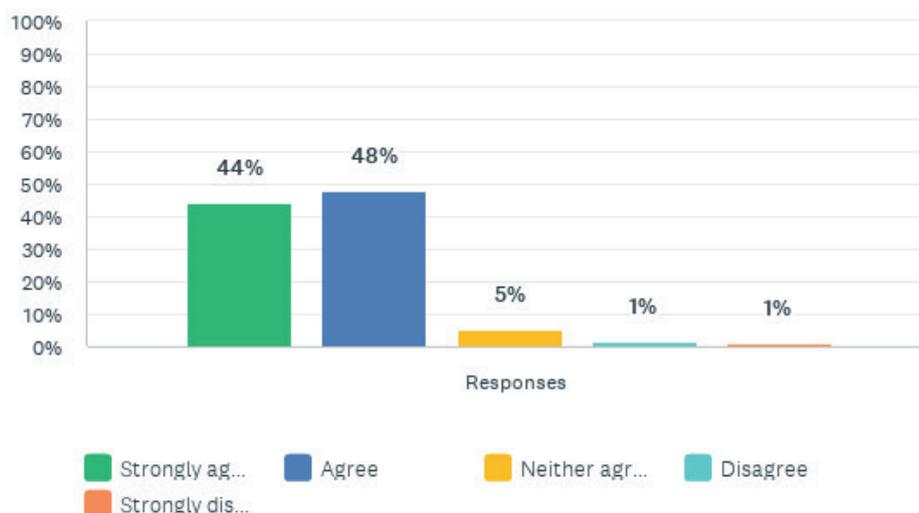
3. Operationalisation

The consultation feedback on the operationalising the NPE can be categorized into themes of:

- What is the role of biodiversity offsets in a net approach?
- What are the principles of a NPE to ensure integrity and accountability?
- How do we decide tradeoffs between nature negative and nature positive activities?
- Who decides which Nature negative economic activities will still be accepted? Who decides which nature is commensurable and what activities can be permitted?
- What is transformative change in a NPE?

Box A2. Survey responses on Operationalising the NPE.

Operationalising the Nature-Positive Economy means taking actions to (1) reduce negative impacts on nature such as identifying and reforming environmentally-harmful policies, subsidies and activities; (2) increase positive actions such as putting in place policies, subsidies and finance to support nature restoration and regeneration; investing in nature-based solutions and enterprises and (3) transformative change towards full recovery on a societal scale such as long-term actions towards systems-wide change including better approaches for valuing nature and measuring progress beyond GDP. Do you agree?



Participants who were critical of the statement cited concerns such as:

- Lack of individual mindset shift
- Risk of greenwashing



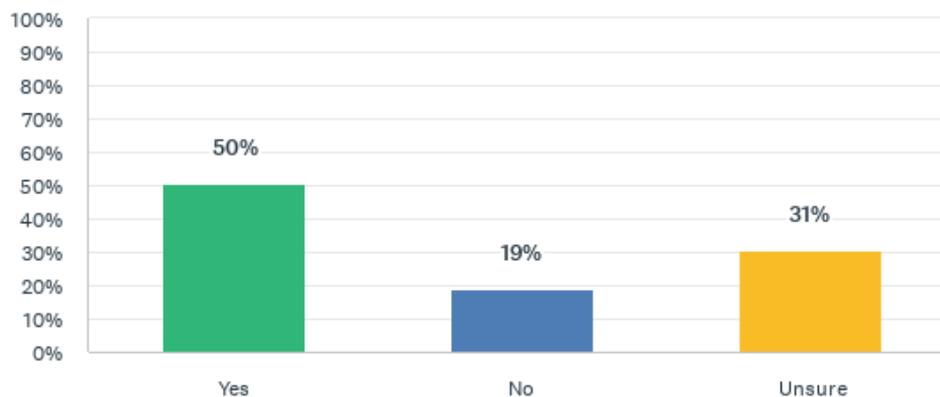
4. Actors

The consultation feedback on the Actors in a NPE can be categorized into themes of:

- How do we deal with tradeoffs between actor groups?
- How would there be an equitable translation from global to country-level, and between actors?
- What accountability mechanisms can we include in a NPE?
- How do we deal with the risk of greenwashing?
- Who decides how 'net nature' is calculated? How do we deal with political aspects of nature valuation?

Box A3. Survey responses on Actors

Actors in a nature-positive economy include: Policy-makers and governments, Businesses including small and medium-sized enterprises, nature-based enterprises, Finance and investors, Standards Bodies, Environmental NGOs, Researchers, Citizens and civil society groups with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), youth. Have we identified all of the key actors in the NPE?



Participants who were critical of the statement cited concerns such as:

- Lack of attention to consumers, Nature as an actor, Youth, gender,
- Notes that not all actors have equal access or influence
- Lack of Education, Media, Healthcare sectors



5. Scale and Measurement

The consultation feedback on the Scale and Measurement in a NPE can be categorized into themes of:

Scale

- How do we deal with cumulative impacts of nature loss?
- How do we deal with tradeoffs of nature-negative and nature-positive activities across sectors?
- How do we deal with tradeoffs of nature-negative and nature-positive sectors at a national scale?
- How do we deal with tradeoffs of nature-negative and nature-positive activities across value chains?

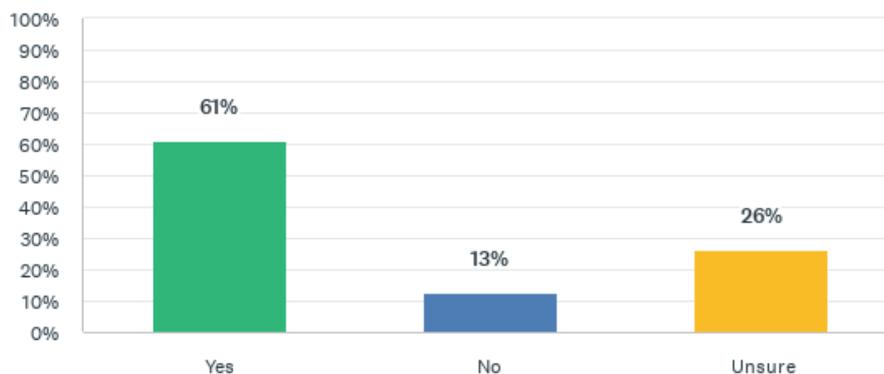
Measurement

- How is nature defined? How is 'an increase in nature' measured?
- How do we sum up all economic activities?

Box A4. Survey responses on Scale

Temporal scale

We suggest a nature-positive economy operates at global, regional, national and local scales. With a temporal scale, we emphasise the NPE as a transitional economy to a point of nature recovery, not an indefinite state for the economy. Is this appropriate?





Participants who were critical of the statement cited concerns such as:

- The NPE is not a transitional economy but rather a state of equilibrium
- Clarity on what is a point of nature recovery and full recovery
- The NPE should be a permanent state of the economy
- Measurement

Measurement

How do we measure a successful nature-positive economy? What kind of indicators would you suggest we use to measure this success?

reduced state community forest restoration social indicators wellbeing enterprise Increase biodiversity amount good
waste businesses access level development financial loss impacts natural capital accounting sector protected areas
changes consider benefits see Index systems quality adoption Tracking Air quality
ecosystem services groups environmental new number surface species evaluate
reduction pollution increase value de economic indicators biodiversity related
nature food indicators water quality measure carbon sequestration use
national ecosystems resources metrics one economic Monitoring include NPE also
indicators measure health population etc recovery ecological many green land economy policies local
biodiversity indexes area human GDP hectares need ensure improvement stakeholders investment carbon
frameworks sustainability scale state nature Assesses ecosystem health Social much e.g growth people decrease



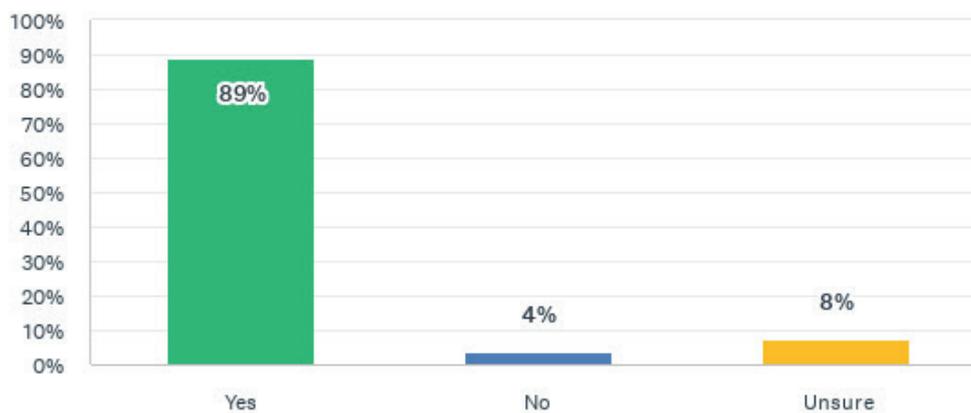
6. Sectors

The consultation feedback on Sectors in a NPE can be categorized into themes of:

- a. Should we phase out harmful sectors?
- b. How do we deal with the risk of greenwashing

Box A5. Survey responses on sectors

Sectors of the NPE. We describe the need to: 1. Reduce negative impacts of all sectors on nature 2. Increase sectors with a positive impact on nature (e.g. regenerative agriculture/forestry/blue economy, Nature-based Solutions). Do you agree?

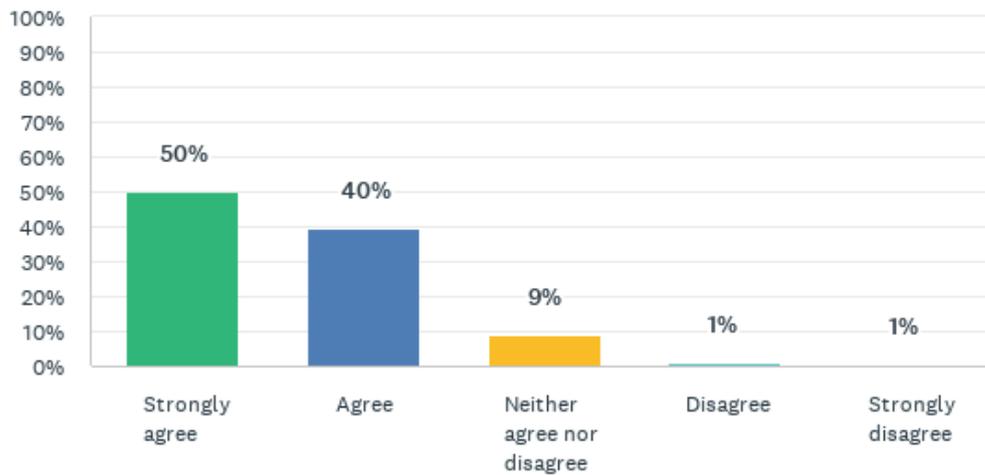


Participants who were critical of the statement cited concerns such as:

- Lack of attention to Innovation and technology
- Harmful sectors should be phased out



We suggest that new opportunities will emerge as part of the transition to a nature-positive economy e.g., in the area of Nature-based Solutions and Nature-based Enterprises in fields such as regenerative agriculture, ecosystem restoration and urban greening. Do you agree?



Participants who were critical of the statement cited concerns such as:

- Risk of greenwashing
- Lack of attention to other sectors such as Technology, Fashion, Mining, Education, Media, Healthcare
- Critical of a 'market' and opportunities framing as it implies more economic growth as the solution in a NPE
- Lack of attention to bottom-up citizen-led initiatives



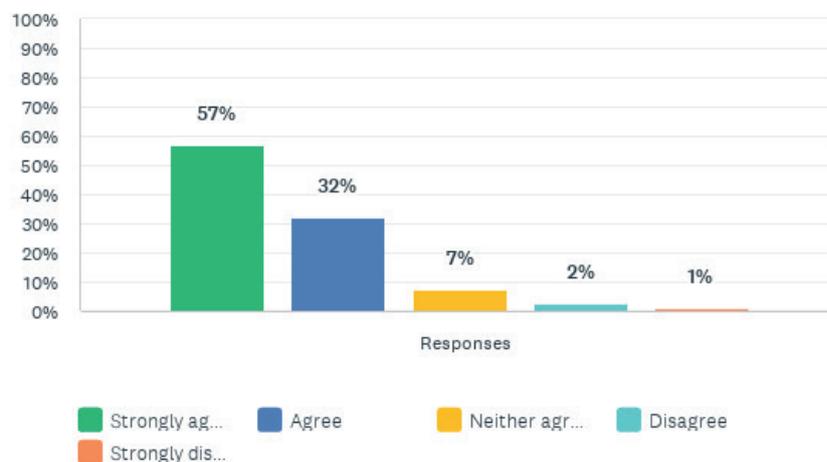
7. Societal factors

The consultation feedback on Societal Factors in a NPE can be categorized into themes of:

- How do we incorporate indigenous worldviews in a NPE?
- What are the safeguards in a NPE?
- How do we deal with justice issues, power relations and vested interests of companies and countries? How do we ensure a just transition?
- What are the environmental justice implications of a net nature approach, such as with biodiversity offsets?
- How do we transition economies dependent on nature extraction in global south?

Box A6. Survey responses on Societal Factors.

Whole of Society Engagement. A Nature-Positive Economy must respect the rights of all, especially those closest to nature like farmers, indigenous people and local communities. All voices should be included in the decision-making process. Do you agree?



Participants who were critical of the statement cited concerns such as:

- Differentiation of rights between IPs and LCs
- Differing perspectives of the roles of farmers and agriculture
- Participatory decision-making from the beginning, not stakeholder consultation after
- Urban versus rural divide
- Polarised societal and political views

Deliverable 1.1
Concept Note:
Framing the Nature-Positive Economy

For more resources, please visit
www.gonaturepositive.eu