

Every Job is a Nature Job

Business Development with Nature in Mind

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Business development shapes a company's future, influencing every aspect of its operations

The decisions made by business development professionals therefore shape a company's impact and reliance on nature. Choices about new products, services, partnerships and sites have consequences for decades to come. With a better understanding of the nature-related implications that these choices have, business development professionals can make decisions that better consider future risks and opportunities.

We define the purpose of business developers as identifying and investigating new business opportunities. Business opportunities related to nature can include:

1. Identifying new markets, partnerships and clients trying to decrease their nature-related impacts
2. Finding new sites, merger & acquisition (M&A) opportunities for regional expansion that can contribute to the company's nature-related ambitions
3. Developing market-leading products and services with lower impacts to nature. By understanding nature better, business development professionals can identify opportunities that allow their company to contribute to and create value in a nature-positive world.

When comparing and evaluating opportunities,

business developers work within structured frameworks to consider a wide range of risks. These frameworks often underrepresent nature-related risks, such as physical, transitional and systemic risks¹. A lack of understanding of these risks can lead to:

1. Delayed permitting processes for new developments
2. Assets being stranded or operating with low efficiency due to dependencies on disappearing ecosystem services
3. Unforeseen adaptation costs. Therefore, an underestimation of nature-related risks can contribute to an underestimation of significant financial risks.

What is in this brief?

In this brief we set out specific actions that can be incorporated into a business development manager's role, with the overall ambition of promoting and advancing nature considerations within the company. This brief is part of the, "Every Job is a Nature Job" series of materials developed by UNEP-WCMC under the Proteus Partnership to support the integration of nature considerations across a range of business functions.

1. See Recommendations of the Taskforce for Nature-Related Financial Disclosures for description and examples of nature-related transition, physical and systemic risks (Tables 1 and 2, pg. 34)

STEP 1

CONSULT

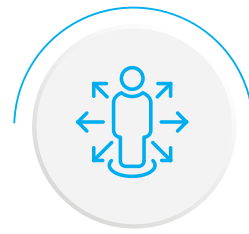


Bring in nature specialists at the earliest stages of concept development and work towards alignment with your nature strategy



STEP 2

CONSIDER



Ensure that the consideration of nature-related risks and opportunities is built into your decision-making process



STEP 3

ANALYSE



Collect data and understand how business development decisions impact nature and how you can improve economic, societal and environmental outcomes



STEP 4

PRESENT



Create a business case that incorporates considerations of nature throughout



- **Work with your environment/ sustainability/ biodiversity team when developing your policies** to align business development with the company's nature commitments
- **Increase the availability of nature-related skills and expertise** within the business development team, through training and recruitment
- **Work with sales and marketing to build a credible brand** around nature and define how development decisions can contribute to that image

- **Examine nature-related risks for development opportunities**, covering both physical and transitional risks
- **Build scenarios to explore future risks**, for example, around impacts to supply chains from loss of ecosystem services or emerging nature-related regulation
- **Plan in adequate time for nature to be considered** throughout business development processes to ensure its integration
- **Engage with stakeholders in the early stages** of concept development to ensure that regional and cultural contexts are considered

- **Use resources like IBAT and ENCORE² to conduct high-level screening exercises** on proposed new locations, commodities and activities
- **Consider which products will be used in your new processes** and where these will be sourced from (see our brief for Procurement)
- **Engage with stakeholders** on how the anticipated impacts of proposed locations or activities could be reduced
- **Research compliance requirements in new regions** to better address impacts and dependencies
- **Research evolving customer behaviour trends** in your target region in relation to nature-friendly products and services

- **Describe how a business development opportunity aligns with the company's nature strategy** when presenting a business case
- Work with sales and marketing to understand how you can best **communicate the business case for nature to your senior management** (see our brief for Leadership)
- **Benchmark your company's performance against industry competitors** in terms of new products and initiatives when presenting the business case
- **Highlight how an opportunity contributes to meeting nature-related requirements** set by regulators, disclosure standards or ESG rating agencies
- **Use as much company specific data as possible during presentations**, highlighting both nature-related risks and opportunities

- **Work with your environment/ sustainability/ biodiversity team to regularly re-evaluate your business development strategy**, increasing ambition and alignment with best practice
- Work with your HR team to **incorporate nature-relevant KPIs into business development performance reviews and scorecards**
- **Participate in cross-sectoral roundtables with business developers from other organizations** to understand how they are approaching nature-related opportunities
- **Work with the contracts team to build nature goals and statements into contracts** (e.g. during joint ventures)

- **Review all types of nature-related risks** with potential relevance, including systemic and societal risks
- **Include nature-related opportunities in the scope of your business development process**, such as access to new markets and financing, building reputational capital, and reducing costs through resource efficiency
- **Use natural capital valuation approaches** to incorporate the value of nature in delivering a business opportunity or when conducting risk assessments
- **Develop KPIs to evaluate** the success of nature considerations across business development
- **Set up monitoring processes that inform your KPIs** to determine the success of integrating nature considerations in your business development processes

- Conduct life-cycle assessments on current products and their supply chains to understand their impacts on nature, **prioritizing high-impact products for replacement** within your business development strategy
- Review all assets in your portfolio with the purpose of **identifying development opportunities and new business models** that align with your nature policies
- **Ensure that nature-related costs are incorporated into decision-making** during business development and cover the measuring, reporting and management of nature impacts from sites
- **Thoroughly investigate the relationship between stakeholders and the ecosystem services** linked to the new opportunity and design ways to enhance or secure these services
- **Assess risks and opportunities at the landscape scale for new locations, commodities and activities**, considering cumulative impact risks and collaborative opportunities to collaborate on actions for nature

- **Showcase the return on investment from integrating nature into your decisions**, for example through natural capital valuation methods and considering avoided costs
- **Consider paying a green premium** when purchasing assets or establishing new processes as these can pay dividends in the long-term
- **Advocate for incorporating nature-specific goals into R&D processes** around new products and services
- **Use success stories and case studies** from pilots of nature positive products and services to illustrate tangible benefits and potential opportunities

²You can access [ENCORE](#) and [IBAT](#) through these links.



About UNEP-WCMC and the Proteus Partnership

The UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is a global centre of excellence on biodiversity and nature's contribution to society and the economy. The Proteus Partnership is a unique collaboration that provides companies with the biodiversity information needed for better informed decisions, and supports the development, improvement and dissemination of global biodiversity data and information. Proteus supports companies to recognize their responsibilities for nature in the context of global momentum to address the biodiversity crisis.

This brief was developed through interviews with Proteus Partners and other multinational businesses and draws on the expertise of UNEP-WCMC experts in applying biodiversity knowledge in the context of a wide range of sectors.