

NATURE POSITIVE TRAVEL & TOURISM

Travelling in harmony with nature



Endorsed by:

Convention on
Biological Diversity

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FOREWORD



Julia Simpson
President & CEO
World Travel & Tourism Council

Travel & Tourism are intrinsically linked to biodiversity and nature. Over half of Travel & Tourism demand is driven by the desire to explore nature, whether it is an international safari of a lifetime or a day trip exploring the countryside. Furthermore, Travel & Tourism is one of six economic sectors with over 80% of its goods and services highly dependent on nature. Similarly, conservation efforts, protected areas and local economies are fuelled by Travel & Tourism revenue and the presence of visitors. In literary terms, nature and biodiversity are the book and the Travel & Tourism sector is the publisher. This interdependence places our sector in a unique position to protect our planet's natural wonders.

Ecosystems that play a part in the supply of food and water, climate stabilisation, water purification, soil formation and nutrient regeneration are foundational to all life on this planet. Increasingly, research is connecting the loss of biodiversity with emerging health diseases. The World Health Organisation, for example, reports that 75% of emerging diseases originate from animals but infect humans. Yet we are hurtling towards ecosystem collapse, with one in four of all animals and plants now identified as threatened with extinction. Reversing biodiversity loss and protecting nature is the right thing to do and it ensures that our planet, and all life that depends on it, thrives for the generations to come. It is also an increasing concern for travellers who are demanding more of their travel providers. They have called on our sector to do more for the planet and demand they are included in that journey. While we have made progress, there is more to be done. Travellers are signing up to be guardians of biodiversity. Not just leaving a lighter footprint but a net positive footprint. Our sector can become a "Guardian of Nature" as we live and promote a Nature Positive approach to tourism.

Nature Positive Travel & Tourism explores how our sector can protect nature while preventing further damage to nature and promoting a regenerative approach to tourism. It also highlights the challenges we must overcome to fulfil our role as a key sector in addressing biodiversity loss and, with it, climate change. We created this report to serve as a resource for Travel & Tourism businesses and a springboard to ensure Nature Positive strategies are employed throughout the Travel & Tourism value chain and in every region. With this research and these recommendations, we can facilitate a more coordinated global effort to living in harmony with nature while enabling global Travel & Tourism and supporting the lives and livelihoods that depend on our sector to survive.



Elizabeth Maruma Mrema
Executive Secretary
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity

Much of the Travel & Tourism sector relies on the beauty of nature and the resources it provides. Consider the local communities whose rich cultures are rooted in nature, beautiful landscapes, coastal resorts, majestic mountain ranges, and the exquisite diversity of wildlife.

Yet, we are losing biodiversity and natural resources at an unprecedented rate. Today's species extinction rates are at least 1000, perhaps as high as 10 000 times, higher than the natural background extinction rate. With that said, the tourism sector has a unique need for, and responsibility to, contribute to the reversal of nature and biodiversity loss.

Nature loss is largely due to the unsustainable ways in which our global society and economy exploits natural resources. We see this is the direct conversion of natural ecosystems on land and at sea, overconsumption of resources such as water and fertile soils, and the emissions of pollutants and wastes. While these pressures are largely due to various human activities, Travel & Tourism does contribute to them. If we also factor in climate change, which not only threatens our amenities and infrastructure with droughts, heatwaves, wildfires and extreme weather events, it also amplifies, and is amplified by, the loss of natural ecosystems.

The good news is that Travel & Tourism is in a unique position to contribute to this reversal by: educating and raising awareness of travellers, hosts, and employees; generating revenue streams that sustain the protection, management, and restoration of ecosystems, protected areas, and other effective forms of land and seascape conservation; reducing footprint activities at the resort and destination level; and innovating in the development of nature-based solutions.

In 2008, Parties adopted the first set of guidelines for tourism and biodiversity under the Convention. In 2016, the sector was called upon by the Parties in Cancún, Mexico through the first set of decisions related to mainstreaming nature into tourism. At the end of 2022, and with the inception of the new Global Biodiversity Framework, the Secretariat is proud to, once again, collaborate with the World Travel & Tourism Council; and I am pleased to welcome and support this initiative and subsequent cooperative work. The threat to nature is clear and imminent, but so is our awareness. We must halt and reverse the destruction of nature. Travel & Tourism has an immense role to play in continuing to strengthen this awareness and help the transition to a more sustainable world.



Madhu Rao
Chair
IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas



Nature in all its manifestations forms the bedrock of the Travel & Tourism industry. People travel for myriad reasons but a significant motivation to travel is to experience nature at its most magnificent, to explore the extraordinary diversity of life forms, to marvel at stunningly beautiful and biodiverse landscapes and seascapes, and to learn from unique and indigenous cultures who have been custodians of nature for millennia. However, nature, as we all know it, is at risk. Direct and indirect drivers of change have accelerated during the past 50 years with nature and its vital contributions to people deteriorating worldwide. There is an unprecedented need to shift course and move away from business as usual, to reverse declining trends and promote the recovery of nature for the future of human well being.

National Parks and other forms of Protected and Conserved Areas are critically important to secure biodiversity and ecosystem services, representing a core strategy to secure some of the most biodiverse areas in the world in partnership with indigenous and local communities, helping stem the forces of destruction and degradation. Area-based conservation measures are core strategies to limit global warming and protect biodiversity, two mutually supporting goals, whose achievement is essential for sustainably and equitably providing benefits to people. Effective and equitable protection of nature through area-based conservation measures such as Protected and Conserved Areas also forms the basis of the Travel & Tourism industry. People travel to National Parks and protected land and seascapes to see thriving wildlife populations, healthy ecosystems and to marvel at the unique indigenous cultures and traditions as part of nature. Travel & tourism can and should contribute significantly to local economies and local conservation efforts while ensuring positive outcomes for nature.

Clearly recognising that we are in a crucial decade, this report makes a strong case that 'Travel & Tourism needs to adopt a Nature Positive approach and act in partnership with others to reach the global goal to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and help build a better world'. In particular, the report makes a significant contribution to the IUCN Resolution 130, adopted by the IUCN members at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille in September 2021, "Strengthening Sustainable Tourism's Role in Biodiversity Conservation and Community Resilience".

We need to, quite urgently, take transformative action toward the recovery of nature and this report is an essential resource that provides useful and timely guidance on a "Nature positive roadmap" for the Travel & Tourism industry. The IUCN WCPA is supportive of the Vision for Nature Positive Travel & Tourism and the findings and guidance offered in this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nature is essential to Travel & Tourism. It is integral for sector growth and prosperity, from its vital ecosystem services to the uniqueness it provides global destinations. More than that, nature supplies clean air, fresh water and food, it supports human development and our resilience to viral pandemics, and offers solutions to climate change. Life simply cannot do without it.

Yet, our collective ecological footprint now far exceeds Earth's rate of regeneration. Cumulative human activity has resulted in widespread loss of natural habitat and biodiversity, with an average **68% decline in the abundance of wildlife** and **1 in 4 species now facing extinction**. The scientific community is calling on business to make “big systematic changes and fast” to address “the huge scale of the challenges we are facing.”¹ The costs of action will be far less than the costs of inaction. Everyone will be affected unless everyone plays their part.

Travel & Tourism can contribute to biodiversity loss, but it can also advance nature conservation. Taking direct action to reduce impacts and restore nature, while encouraging supply chains and destination partners to do the same, can protect our planet and also boost tourism appeal. Managed well, Travel & Tourism can reconnect people with nature, invest in species protection through effective community-led partnerships and play a leading role in a Nature Positive future.

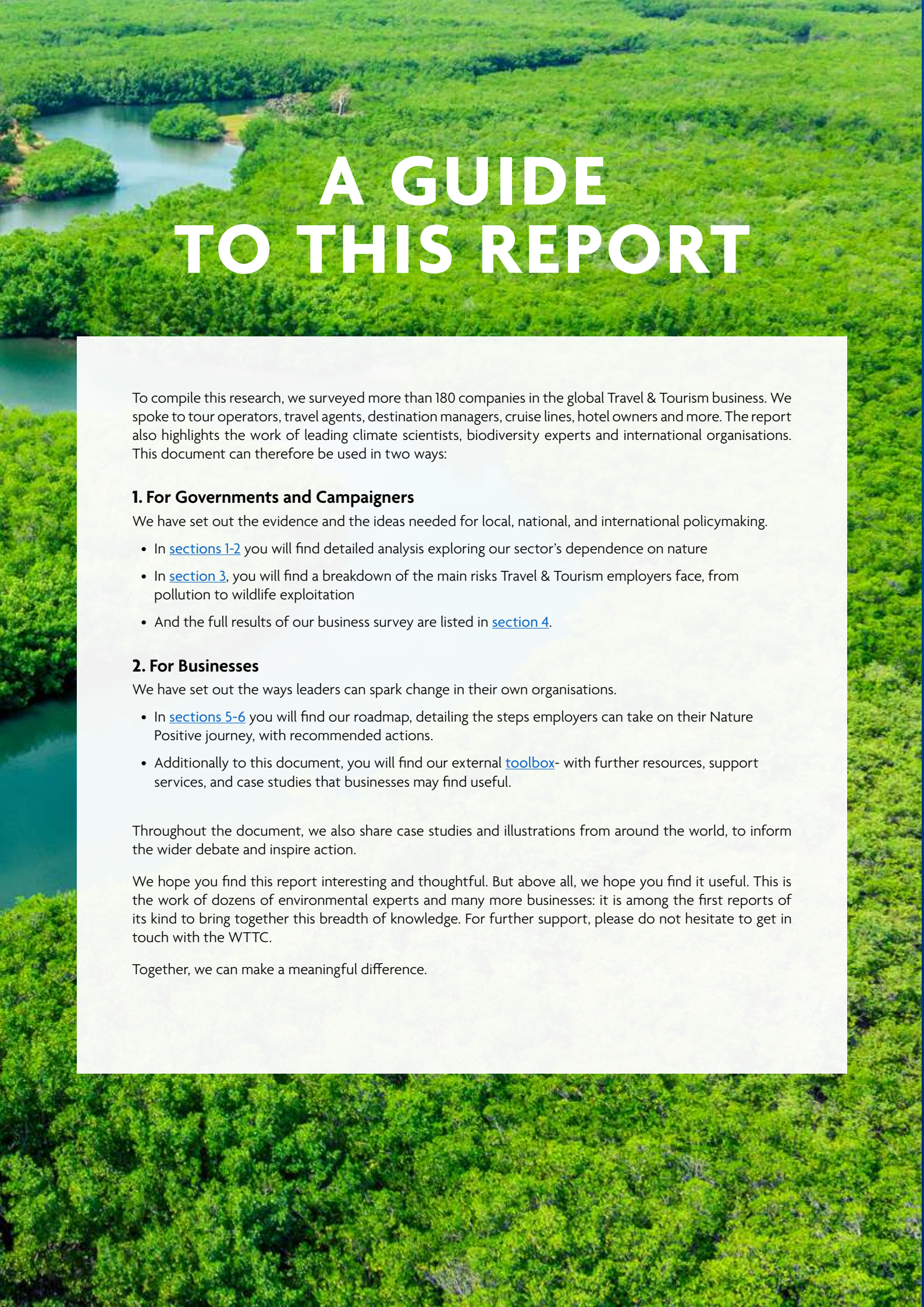
As global governments consider the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (nature's equivalent of the Paris Climate Accords), the private sector can play a defining role. Where Travel & Tourism has an opportunity to lead by example and integrate biodiversity safeguards through adopting a Nature Positive approach. This involves halting and reversing damage to nature so that the whole living world can recover from its current depleted state by minimising ongoing harm and taking positive action to restore nature. In this way Travel & Tourism can produce an overall benefit to biodiversity while ensuring a more sustainable and resilient sector and helping achieve Net Zero.

This report offers a starting point for Travel & Tourism to understand the need for a Nature Positive approach. It explains how businesses can embed these values into their operations and what measures are necessary to manage and mitigate risks while leveraging positive action. It includes a Nature Positive Toolbox which offers practical guidance, case studies and a glossary, as well as Recommendations to guide stakeholders towards Nature Positive Travel & Tourism.

The Business Case for Nature

- **More than 80% of the value of Travel & Tourism goods and services is highly dependent on nature** – from the demand for raw materials to the popularity of nature-based tourism.
- **Nature plays an essential role in climate change mitigation and adaptation**, with more biodiverse habitats typically storing more carbon and being more resilient to climate change.
- An Economist Intelligence Unit survey found that over **90% of people, across the world, are concerned about the loss of animal and plant species**.
- Businesses around the world are likely to be required to assess and disclose impact and dependencies on biodiversity, and report on actions to avoid or minimise harmful practices and to protect biodiversity and restore nature.
- Travel & Tourism businesses are supportive of a Nature Positive agenda but there is limited understanding of the fundamental concepts and what actions are necessary to put a Nature Positive commitment into practice.
- Travel & Tourism should adopt the Nature Positive approach as an integral part of business, working with destination partners and suppliers to halt any exploitation or degradation of the natural world while undertaking and enabling additional actions to restore nature.

During this “make-or-break decade”,² Travel & Tourism needs to adopt a Nature Positive approach and act in partnership with others to reach the global goal to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and help build a better world.



A GUIDE TO THIS REPORT

To compile this research, we surveyed more than 180 companies in the global Travel & Tourism business. We spoke to tour operators, travel agents, destination managers, cruise lines, hotel owners and more. The report also highlights the work of leading climate scientists, biodiversity experts and international organisations. This document can therefore be used in two ways:

1. For Governments and Campaigners

We have set out the evidence and the ideas needed for local, national, and international policymaking.

- In [sections 1-2](#) you will find detailed analysis exploring our sector's dependence on nature
- In [section 3](#), you will find a breakdown of the main risks Travel & Tourism employers face, from pollution to wildlife exploitation
- And the full results of our business survey are listed in [section 4](#).

2. For Businesses

We have set out the ways leaders can spark change in their own organisations.

- In [sections 5-6](#) you will find our roadmap, detailing the steps employers can take on their Nature Positive journey, with recommended actions.
- Additionally to this document, you will find our external [toolbox](#)- with further resources, support services, and case studies that businesses may find useful.

Throughout the document, we also share case studies and illustrations from around the world, to inform the wider debate and inspire action.

We hope you find this report interesting and thoughtful. But above all, we hope you find it useful. This is the work of dozens of environmental experts and many more businesses: it is among the first reports of its kind to bring together this breadth of knowledge. For further support, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the WTTC.

Together, we can make a meaningful difference.

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INTRODUCTION

“Never before have we had such an awareness of what we are doing to the planet, and never before have we had the power to do something about that”

Sir David Attenborough, UN Champion of the Earth,
World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, Davos, 2019

1 Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse is one of the top threats humanity will face in the next ten years.³ With over half of the world’s total GDP moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services,⁴ humanity urgently needs to rethink its relationship with animals and nature, and to halt and reverse the alarming exploitation and degradation of the natural world.

While there has recently been unprecedented global momentum around climate change and decarbonisation, biodiversity loss and nature protection continue to be widely disconnected from most conversations. In 2021, the world’s leading biodiversity and climate experts acknowledged that biodiversity loss and climate change mutually reinforce each other and are being driven by the same human activities, hence they can only be tackled together.⁵ In fact, effective habitat conservation measures, including protected areas and habitat restoration programmes, are integral to climate mitigation and adaptation activities as well as to minimising pandemic risks, making biodiversity and nature protection a key element in solving the current global crises.

Travel & Tourism is one of only six economic sectors with more than 80% of the value of its goods and services highly dependent on nature⁶ – from the demand for raw materials to the popularity of nature-based tourism. Furthermore, over 50% of the Travel & Tourism market share is driven by nature tourism and the desire to explore new environments, which is expected to grow year on year.^{7,8,9,10} Wildlife tourism, a component of nature tourism, contributes millions of dollars a year to protected areas, strengthening conservation efforts and supporting sustainable development and community empowerment.

Since 1970, there has been a 68% average decline in species population sizes,¹² with an estimated 40,000 species - 1 in 4 of all animals and plants - identified as threatened with extinction.¹³ Destruction and degradation of natural habitats, overexploitation of natural resources and global warming are driving these declines.



Public concern

The Economist Intelligence Unit measured the engagement, awareness and action for nature across 54 countries globally – covering 80% of the world’s population – between 2016 and 2020. It found that hundreds of millions of people are concerned about the loss of animal and plant species, including over 90% of people in Brazil, the EU and India, and around 85% in the USA and Sub-Saharan Africa.¹¹

“The research shows that people care about nature and want businesses and governments to take action and make bold decisions to protect and restore biodiversity. We cannot miss this opportunity to transform our relationship with nature and secure an equitable, nature-positive and resilient future for all.”

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Considering this mutual dependency, the potential consequences of biodiversity loss and nature degradation are critical for the sector.

To enable a more sustainable and resilient sector, it is essential that all stakeholders adopt a Nature Positive approach. This complements and strengthens ongoing decarbonisation efforts with actions to avoid or minimise the overexploitation and degradation of nature. Current negotiations ahead of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15 on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework present a new milestone in these joint efforts. The increased international attention on commercial impacts on nature will present Travel & Tourism with an opportunity to demonstrate its potential for positive contributions and to play a leading role in building a global Nature Positive future.

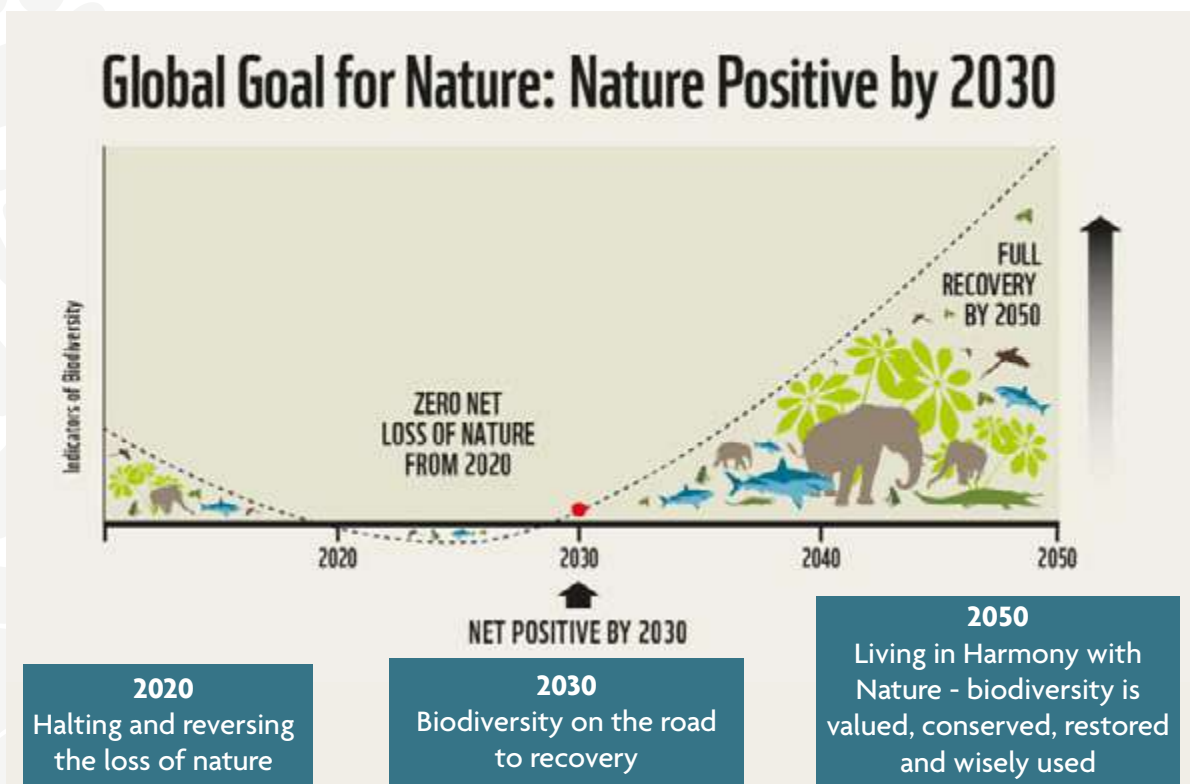
ABOUT THIS REPORT – Supporting Nature Positive Action

This report aims to help stakeholders in the Travel & Tourism sector understand and act on the urgent need to protect biodiversity and nature. It is aimed at all companies that wish to strategically understand and manage their impact on biodiversity. The sector’s survival depends on nature and biodiversity, and it can be a catalyst for change beyond Travel & Tourism. A Nature Positive approach is vital for people and planet and can be the cornerstone of a sound business strategy and sustainable growth for the sector.

The following definition of Nature Positive presents the guiding concept behind this report:

Halting and reversing damage to nature so that the whole living world can recover from its current depleted state. This involves minimising ongoing harm and taking positive action to restore nature to produce an overall benefit to biodiversity and to help achieve Net Zero.

Figure 1 - “A Nature Positive World”¹⁴



Source: Global Goal for Nature (2021) <https://www.naturepositive.org/>

This report explains how businesses can embed Nature Positive values into their operations and destination activities, as well as manage and mitigate risks while leveraging positive action. It offers a starting point for all stakeholders to contribute to closing the existing gaps between conversations around climate change, biodiversity loss and nature protection.

While it primarily includes guidance for the private sector, key links with the public sector are highlighted throughout the report to offer a comprehensive framework for Nature Positive action.

Global Biodiversity Framework – Defining the Business Commitment

In December 2022, 196 national governments will attend COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to finalise a new global agreement on nature – the Global Biodiversity Framework. This sets out an ambitious, worldwide plan to implement broad-based actions to transform society’s relationship with biodiversity and establish global targets for business and financial institutions. It seeks to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and ensure society can “Live in Harmony with Nature” by 2050. The draft Framework identifies 22 action-oriented targets (as of July 2022), organised into three categories: reducing threats to biodiversity, meeting people’s needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing, and tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming. Target 15 requires businesses to “assess and report on dependencies and impacts on biodiversity, from local to global, and to progressively reduce negative impacts”. Governments are expected to adopt the agreed policies in domestic legislation and supporting policy.¹⁵



An aerial photograph of a dense, lush green forest. The foreground is filled with a thick canopy of trees in various shades of green. In the middle ground, several taller, more prominent trees stand out. The background shows rolling hills and mountains, with a thick layer of white mist or low clouds rising between the forested areas, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere. The sky is overcast with soft, grey clouds.

**THE
IMPORTANCE
OF NATURE**

2

Nature is the very fabric on which all life on Earth is based and is essential to human existence.

It includes both non-living natural materials, such as soil, water and stone, and all living things, from bacteria to blue whales.

Humans are part of nature – one species of an estimated 8 million animals, plants, fungi, and other organisms which share the world's natural resources and interact with each other through a complex web of connections. Each species within this biological diversity, or biodiversity, has evolved unique attributes to survive in a living community, or ecosystem, and to co-exist with a myriad other species.

However, an estimated 75% of the land surface and 66% of marine environments have been significantly altered by unsustainable human activity since 1970.¹⁶ Current human activities are exhausting the planet's natural resources, driving huge declines in biodiversity and destabilising nature. In fact, the day in each calendar year when human demand for natural resources exceeds the planet's ability to replace them (Earth Overshoot Day) gets earlier every year: in 1970 it was 30 December, while in 2021 it was 29 July.¹⁷ Current demands on the natural world are equivalent to the output of 1.6 Earths,¹⁸ imposing an ever-growing strain on the biosphere and causing unprecedented global declines in biodiversity.

The loss of biodiversity, and likely ecosystem collapse, are now considered within the three most severe risks facing the world over the next ten years.¹⁹ Continuing down this damaging path presents extreme risks for nature and critical uncertainty for the global economy and society.^{20,21}



Ecosystems and Ecosystem Services

Nature's ecosystems are vital to human life, prosperity and wellbeing. Ecosystems are natural communities where living organisms (plants, animals, fungi, etc) and the non-living environment (soil, air, sunlight, weather, etc) interact as a unit through biological, physical and chemical processes. They can be land or water-based (e.g. woodland or coral reefs) and of any scale (from a pond to the Amazon rainforest).

Ecosystem services are natural functions of an ecosystem that serves human needs. This includes providing raw materials, such as food and water; regulatory services, including climate stabilisation, crop pollination and water purification; soil formation and nutrient cycling processes; and cultural services, such as recreation and tourism. Nature's global economic value generation is estimated at US\$44 trillion.²²

These services depend on biodiversity – the living component of the ecosystem. If this is unbalanced or lost, the ecosystem may start to unravel and possibly collapse. Protecting biodiversity is therefore vital to maintain ecosystems and the benefits society receives from them.

2.1. Nature and Sustainable Development

Governments globally are increasingly recognising that nature loss is not just an environmental issue but something that threatens our economies and societies, and that the costs of inaction far outweigh the costs of action. The adoption of the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provided a series of targets designed to meet the needs of people and planet.²³ Of the 17 SDGs, those related to the biosphere are particularly fundamental; societies and economies are inherently embedded in the biosphere and reliant on its protection.

Figure 2- The SDG ‘Wedding Cake’



Source: Stockholm Resilience Centre (2016) <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/research-news/2016-06-14-the-sdgs-wedding-cake.html>

The diagram shows the dependencies between the SDGs. The economic goals can only be achieved if the social goals are successful, and these depend on meeting the environmental, or biosphere goals.²⁴ A focus on social or economic dimensions and neglecting nature, inevitably leads to a “human-driven decline of life on Earth”²⁵

2.2. Nature and Emerging Threats

Understanding biodiversity risks and building effective mitigation strategies requires clear definitions, better impact assessment, robust monitoring and regular reporting. Most current global challenges are connected and a holistic approach is required to solve them. Biodiversity has a significant impact on both emerging diseases and climate change, and therefore addressing the loss of biodiversity is critical to tackling these issues.

Emerging Disease

There is growing evidence connecting trends in human development, land use, animal exploitation and biodiversity loss to emerging infectious diseases, highlighted by the IPBES Workshop on Biodiversity and Pandemics²⁶. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 75% of emerging diseases are zoonotic²⁷—originating from animals but infecting humans – including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), bird flu and COVID-19. The mixing of wild and domestic animals in trade and marketplaces can provide ideal conditions for the emergence of new diseases, as well as an opportunity to transmit to humans. Transmission can also take place when people clear natural areas, which is known to increase populations of high-risk species.²⁸

Consequently, efforts to preserve biodiversity and end deforestation, direct contact with wild animals and the trade in wildlife are increasingly recognised as essential

to preventing a predicted “era of pandemics”²⁹. It would likely cost US\$22 billion a year to prevent deforestation and regulate wildlife trade, which is just 2% of the economic and mortality costs of the COVID-19 pandemic response.³⁰

The World Health Organisation concluded its investigation into the origins of COVID-19 by calling on governments to suspend all markets “where live animals are held, slaughtered and dressed”, noting they “pose a particular risk for pathogen transmission to workers and customers alike”. It concluded that COVID-19 most likely originated from a species of bat, infecting humans via another, yet to be identified, animal species.³¹

Climate Change

Nature plays an essential role in climate change mitigation and adaptation, with existing ecosystems holding vast carbon stores, and more biodiverse habitats typically storing more carbon and being more resilient to climate change. For instance, due to extensive deforestation, hotter dry seasons and increased wildfires, the Amazon rainforest is now emitting more CO₂ into the atmosphere than it is removing.³²

There is no clear path to deliver optimal climate action without investing in nature. A combination of ambitious land- and ocean-based actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore ecosystems, together with reductions in emissions, will be needed to deliver global goals on climate and biodiversity. Here, public, private and civil society stakeholders have different roles, but meaningful change will only be achieved through a joint effort to better protect animals and nature.

2.3. Nature and Business

Ensuring a Nature Positive future requires a shift of focus and significant investment. While it has taken a long time to get climate risk frameworks integrated into financial thinking, the hope is that biodiversity risk will be much quicker.³³ According to the Nature Conservancy,³⁴ the nature funding gap can be closed for less than 1% of global GDP – equivalent to what the world spends on cigarettes or soft drinks each year. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has found that for every dollar spent on nature restoration, at least US\$9 of economic benefits can be expected.³⁵

As the largest potential source of investment in climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, and with the ability to effect positive change across entire value chains, the private sector has a crucial role to play in these global endeavours. Every economic sector has some degree of direct and indirect dependency on nature, with a third of high-growth economies, such as India and Indonesia, highly dependent on it.³⁶

Yet, a recent independent review, commissioned by the UK Government, on the Economics of Biodiversity clearly identified that both businesses and governments still fail to account for “natural capital”.³⁷ It proposes an alternative approach where economic evaluations rely less on GDP and focus more on natural capital: the stock of natural resources (including geology, soils, air, water and all living things) and their value in financial terms, based on their importance to human wellbeing and planetary health. By adopting a natural capital approach, businesses can account for natural resource use and quantify their impact on the natural environment in a reliable, consistent and continuous manner.³⁸ For example, it has been calculated that Mexico’s mangrove forests provide an annual US\$70 billion to the economy through storm protection, fisheries support and ecotourism.³⁹

The draft Global Biodiversity Framework recognises the crucial role of the private sector in the required transformation of society’s relationship with nature. This includes managing the use of natural resources and minimising its impact on nature; it recognises that businesses have enormous power to protect and restore nature.⁴⁰ Businesses can help mobilise financial resources and technical capabilities, leverage government efforts, engage civil society, integrate and enhance community efforts, and develop innovative services and technological solutions.

Through better impact assessment, strategic planning, robust monitoring and regular reporting, businesses can better understand the scale and speed of biodiversity loss and actions to reduce it. Coordinated action to mainstream biodiversity commitment, cross-disciplinary collaboration and targeted education can help achieve these goals.

“

Integrating active management of biodiversity into core business strategies can be a tremendous profit-enhancing opportunity for firms. Conversely, a lack of consideration can be incredibly costly.”

UN Convention on Biological Diversity

”

A group of monkeys, including several adults and young infants, are perched on a large, light-colored stone structure. The structure has a tiered, decorative top. The monkeys are looking in various directions, some towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with a clear sky and some distant trees. The text "NATURE + TRAVEL & TOURISM" is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

**NATURE +
TRAVEL &
TOURISM**

3

Nature provides destinations with unique identities and is a core part of their appeal to travellers.

Even in urban destinations, nature tourism is estimated to capture around 7% of global tourism expenditure with rapid growth expanding over the last decade.^{41,42} It generates revenues of over US\$600 billion,⁴³ providing opportunities for countries to grow and diversify their economies while protecting their biodiversity and natural heritage.

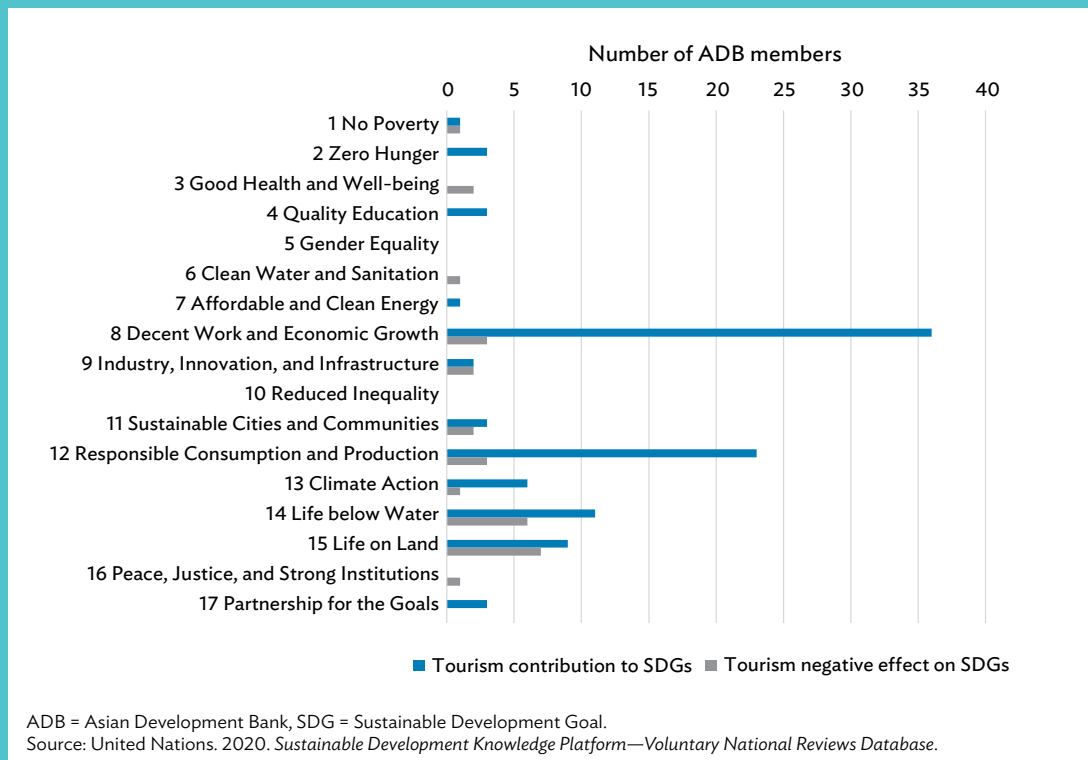
Wildlife presents the primary motivator for nature tourism, with wildlife tourism contributing US\$343 billion annually and 21.8 million jobs globally. It also contributes millions of dollars to protected areas and conservation, supports sustainable development and local community empowerment, and can drive climate change mitigation and improved governance.^{44,45}

In Africa – where nature and national parks are considered some of the most important tourism assets – wildlife tourism generates around US\$142 million in entrance fees for protected areas.⁴⁶ In low income, biodiversity-rich economies, wildlife tourism revenues can dominate regional and national tourism revenues.^{47,48}

The business benefits of a Nature Positive agenda include improved reputation and consumer trust; brand enhancement and competitor differentiation; appeal to socially conscious and environmentally aware employees and customers; an inspired, experiential product portfolio; strategic positioning in a growing marketplace of responsible travellers; and progress towards the UN SDGs.

Negative & Positive Effects of Travel & Tourism

Figure 3 - Travel & Tourism contribution to the progress of UN SDGs



Source: United Nations. 2020. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform - Voluntary National Reviews Database.⁴⁹

This chart (Figure 3) shows how often Asian Development Bank members made positive or negative references to Travel & Tourism when reviewing progress towards SDGs. Although negative aspects feature, positive effects are much more common, especially in the case of SDG8 Decent Work & Economic Growth and SDG12 Responsible Consumption & Production.⁵⁰

3.1. Identifying the Impacts on Nature

To address biodiversity loss, it is prudent to understand some of its key drivers. As harmful practices are embedded in many global sectors and industries, adopting a Nature Positive approach is key to ending those practices and creating more sustainable business models.

The five accepted major drivers of biodiversity loss⁵¹ are:

- **Changing land and sea use**
- **Direct exploitation of resources and organisms**
- **Climate change**
- **Pollution**
- **Invasion of non-native species**

Land and Sea Use

Land-use change presents the main human influence on habitats and can have serious effects on biodiversity. Even damage to small areas can break up larger blocks of habitat and have severe consequences, for instance by limiting connections between wildlife populations and restricting access to seasonal food or water sources. The key causes of land-use change include conversion of land cover (e.g. deforestation or mining), changes in management (e.g. intensification of agriculture or forest harvesting) and infrastructure development.

Building Travel & Tourism infrastructure can have a significant impact on nature through poorly conceived landscaping or clearing wild or semi-wild areas for new construction or access routes. The supply chain also has an effect on sea and land use, including through the sourcing of agricultural products and natural materials. Environmental Impact Assessments can address these issues but need to be fully incorporated from design to construction, throughout ongoing use and in the removal and restoration processes. Collaboration with local people, partners and suppliers is also fundamental for sustainable development. Working closely with local communities, especially indigenous communities, in the creation of tourism products and services can help mitigate negative effects. It is also fundamental that the rights, livelihoods, culture and quality of life of all communities is respected and valued in tourism development processes.

DID YOU KNOW?

Currently, land degradation has reduced productivity in 23% of the global terrestrial area, and between US\$235 billion and US\$577 billion in annual global crop output is at risk as a result of pollinator loss. Across the highly biodiverse tropics, 32 million hectares of primary or recovering forest were lost between 2010 and 2015. Loss of coastal habitats, such as mangroves and coral reefs, reduces coastal protection, which increases the risk to life and property from floods and hurricanes for the 100 million to 300 million people living within coastal 100-year flood zones.⁵²



Direct Exploitation

Natural resources are finite. Overuse of these resources causes direct harm to the natural environment as can activities that affect the behaviour of wildlife and the overuse of sensitive, often high-biodiverse, natural areas. A Nature Positive development approach involves being conscious of both the direct and indirect exploitation involved in a business's operations and ending this through responsible sourcing and effective tourism and resource management. This should include consideration of animal welfare - the physical and mental state of individual animals, such as whether they are suffering from pain, fear or stress. Animals in captivity are at particularly high risk as they require conditions that meet the needs of their species; keeping them in unsuitable conditions can lead to the development of abnormal behaviour, disease and early death.^{53,54}

The illegal trade in wild animals and plants for commercial use is a significant driver of biodiversity loss – animals and plants may be taken from the wild and sold onto attractions, hotels or directly to travellers, for instance as food, souvenirs or use in entertainment activities. The Travel & Tourism sector is critical in the eradication of illegal wildlife trade and protecting these species. In 2018, signatories to the WTTC Buenos Aires Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade made a commitment to raising awareness among travellers about wildlife products in souvenirs.⁵⁵ Explaining why these policy positions have been taken educates and informs the customer, giving them a deeper understanding on which to base their own decisions, and paving the way for meaningful and lasting change.

Climate Change

Climate change represents one of humanity's major challenges, posing an immense threat to global society, sustainable development and biodiversity. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report highlights that with a warming of 1.5°C, up to 14% of all land species are expected to go extinct; with a 3°C warming, up to 29% will be seriously threatened.⁵⁶ As one of the most important economic activities driving growth and development around the world, Travel & Tourism contributes to climate change while at the same time being highly affected by it. The WTTC "Net Zero Roadmap for Travel & Tourism" published in 2021 provides more detailed insights on potential decarbonisation scenarios for the sector, offering further guidance on how to reduce net carbon emissions in different industries.⁵⁷ with an expected 25% rise in transport-related CO₂ emissions by 2030 (from 2016 levels)⁵⁸ Travel & Tourism must set a more ambitious course to Net Zero, requiring holistic approaches in which environmental goals, such as biodiversity and nature protection, are incorporated alongside climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. The Glasgow Declaration on Climate Actions in Tourism⁵⁹ provides a catalyst for increased urgency on climate action in tourism, and presents essential five pathways for halving emissions over the next decade which include regenerating nature as an essential component.

DID YOU KNOW?

Coral reefs are particularly vulnerable to climate change and are projected to decline to 10–30% of former coverage at 1.5°C warming and to less than 1% of former coverage at 2°C warming. Limiting global warming to well below 2°C plays a critical role in reducing adverse impacts on nature and its contributions to people.⁶⁰



Pollution

A wide range of substances and materials originating from Travel & Tourism can find their way into natural environments where they are damaging or toxic to biodiversity. Even when disposed of through proper channels, plastic and other waste materials often end up being blown or washed away, scavenged by animals or entering the natural environment in other ways. However, pollution does not just come from waste products; it includes substances intentionally released into ecosystems, such as pesticides and herbicides, which cause unintended harm.

Light and noise pollution, which may be generated by Travel & Tourism activities such as infrastructure and vehicles, can also have negative effects on wildlife. Artificial light at night has been identified as a cause of declines in insect populations⁶¹ while lights near beaches are known to disorientate nesting turtles. Sounds from boats and ships can disturb whales and other marine animals and have been shown to affect the behaviour of narwhals at distances of over 40km.⁶²

DID YOU KNOW?

Marine plastic pollution has increased tenfold since 1980, affecting at least 267 species, including 86% of marine turtles, 44% of seabirds and 43% of marine mammals. This can affect humans through food chains.⁶³ More details on our sector's responsibility to transition to a circular economy of plastics in tourism has been showcased in the WTTC and UNEP report "Rethinking Single-Use Plastics Products in Travel & Tourism"⁶⁴, which highlights the greatest challenges and areas for actions regarding plastic waste and microplastics, and UNWTO's Global Tourism Plastics Initiative⁶⁵ which promotes the elimination of problematic plastics, the integration of reuse models and the collaboration with suppliers and waste managers.



Invasive Species

One of the major threats to existing ecosystems is the arrival of plant and animal species from other parts of the world, often called non-native or alien species. Cumulative records of non-native species have increased by 40% since 1980, associated with increased trade and human population dynamics and trends.⁶⁶ Removed from their own ecosystem and the predators, parasites and other factors which hold them in balance there, they can reproduce and expand rapidly in their new environments. While some invasive species are introduced deliberately as ornamental plants, exotic pets or livestock, others may arrive as stowaways in produce, natural materials, imported soil and in ballast water from ships.

International restrictions on transporting foods, living materials and other products help prevent the introduction and spread of non-native species. For example, the Ballast Water Management Convention⁶⁷ helps prevent the spread of potentially harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens in ships' ballast water. While following and advocating for effective legislation, the supply chain can actively foster traveller understanding and awareness to further minimise the introduction of invasive species in destinations they visit or when they return home.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly one fifth of the Earth’s surface is at risk of plant and animal invasions, impacting native species, ecosystem functions and nature’s contributions to people, as well as economies and human health. The rate of introduction of new invasive species seems higher than ever before and shows no signs of slowing.⁶⁸



3.2. Opportunities to Protect and Restore Nature

The private sector must take a proactive role to protect and restore nature. This is essential to achieve Net Zero goals and a vital step for businesses developing sustainable and resilient approaches towards activities they directly operate and indirectly influence. Nature Positive actions can also be valuable commercial investments and can enable collaboration with local organisations and the empowerment of local communities. Effective activities include;

- Delivering powerful and informative communication for customers
- Raising awareness among other businesses and public bodies
- Supporting other Nature Positive initiatives

While many activities exist, they can be grouped into four themes:

- Reconnecting people and nature
- Supporting sustainable value chains
- Protecting animals and their welfare
- Investing in nature

Reconnecting People and Nature



To galvanise support and prevent biodiversity loss, it is imperative that all people see and understand our vital connection with the natural environment. By helping travellers and staff understand and reconnect with nature while collaborating with local communities and governments, Travel & Tourism stakeholders can enable a Nature Positive sector.

Raising awareness among travellers

According to a UN analysis in 2018, By 2050, around 70% of the human population is expected to live in cities⁶⁹, underlining the need to remind people of our connection with nature. This personal relationship is crucial to foster an understanding and appreciation of the importance of the biosphere. Businesses appear to be more influential than governments when it comes to driving consumer preferences,⁷⁰ and with its direct links to nature, Travel & Tourism has the means to engage travellers and inspire conservation.

Educating and inspiring colleagues

Employees increasingly expect their employers to commit to climate-positive action, with 65% more likely to work for a company with strong environmental policies and 63% wishing to upskill their environmental knowledge to make a more positive, lasting impact in their role.⁷¹ As a large and growing section of today’s workforce comprises ethically motivated Millennials and Gen Zers, with the Millennials now occupying many management positions, a planet-first focus is forcing a revolution in workplace culture. Following and fostering a Nature Positive culture & development therefore offers opportunities to increase competitive advantages in and outside of the business.



Nature Positive Actions: Working together to tackle illegal wildlife trade

Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), American Society for Travel Agents (ASTA), and Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), launched a joint initiative with the U.S. Wildlife Trafficking Alliance. Creating a “Know Before You Go / Ask Before You Buy” digital toolkit, travel and tourism industry leaders were provided resources to help travellers recognise and avoid purchasing illegal wildlife products.⁷²

Collaborating with governments

The private sector can also influence local and national policymaking and investment – particularly in countries where the sector is a significant contributor to GDP. Working with national and local government departments, the private sector can contribute actively by providing compelling incentives to enact or better enforce policies and actions to boost biodiversity. Through public-private partnership, sector stakeholders can influence other government departments to act on issues such as controlling deforestation, cracking down on wildlife trade, protecting fragile habitats and promoting sustainable fishing. Namibia, for example, was the first African country to add the protection of the environment to its constitution, and today 44% of its territory is designated as protected. This is largely due to tourism revenues that contribute to over 10% of national GDP.



Nature Positive Actions: Inspiring the next generation

Abercrombie & Kent believes the discussion around Nature Positive is one that people are willing to have in the run-up to 2030. Staff – particularly the Millennials and Gen Zers, customers, investors, and regulators are all contributing to a push for a sustainable future. Camille Drevillon, SVP, Strategic Planning and Business Development states, “Businesses that do not focus on this will see their reputations suffer and struggle to attract staff, customers and financing”.



Nature Positive Actions: Tourism as an influencer on national policy

Following strong advocacy from Travel & Tourism businesses, in support of the efforts by the animal-protection NGO FOUR PAWS, the Hoi An People’s Committee (Vietnam) decided to end the dog and cat meat trade in order to control rabies spread and protect the health of local people and tourists alike.^{73,74} This successful advocacy effort continues throughout Vietnam and beyond.



Supporting sustainable value chains



Achieving Nature Positivity requires the support of sustainable value chains to ensure no activities are hindering the achievement of Nature Positive goals. Travel & Tourism can support sustainable development, empower local communities, encourage good governance and influence nature conservation in its value chain through intentional action.

Support for suppliers

Much of any business’s impact on nature takes place through the value chain, and addressing these indirect effects is critical to achieving Nature Positive goals.⁷⁵ Suppliers should be encouraged to adopt Nature Positive practices through information exchange, training, collaborative problem solving and assistance with reporting, backed up by contractual requirements. Through increased support for suppliers to adjust their operations rather than simply ending or not renewing contracts, travel businesses can achieve their Nature Positive goals while influencing a broader move to more sustainable operations. In times where organisations are held more accountable for their impact on nature by consumers, employees and business partners, these efforts represent increasing competitive advantages.



Nature Positive Actions: *Fostering Nature-Positive efforts across the value chain*

Leading global luxury network Virtuoso uses its consumer content and trusted travel advisor training to make sustainability a greater factor in consumer choice when planning travel, helping tourism best practices translate into business success. The network’s travel advisors and preferred partners are invited to join the Virtuoso Sustainability Community to educate, inspire and emphasize the importance of supporting sustainable philosophies and practices in travel and tourism.

Empowering and collaborating with local communities

Establishing and nurturing public-private-community partnerships is essential for Travel & Tourism and key for sustainable development. Supporting local sustainable operations can enhance the local economy, reduce impacts on nature, and stimulate progressive local development. Engaging local communities can also help to define and deliver a model of nature-based tourism which positively impacts communities and informs more enabling policies and inclusive itineraries. Businesses can also help to instil greater local environmental awareness by supporting environmental education, community-based conservation projects, and opportunities for local schools and community groups to connect with nature, for instance by visiting the countryside or national parks.

Ensuring positive impacts for local communities through additional Nature Positive actions is also essential, especially in rural or disadvantaged areas and in lower income countries. Positive engagement with indigenous people is particularly important, with 80% of the world’s biodiversity found in indigenous lands.⁷⁶ Supporting indigenous rights can be a highly effective way to protect biodiversity, enabling people with a strong connection to the land to make decisions about its use, and simultaneously creating tourism opportunities and local income generation. Their leadership is key to the conservation and sustainable development of their own lands, as well as ecosystems globally.⁷⁷ In Canada, indigenous peoples’ territories represent much of the natural lands and waters, and indigenous tourism is a US\$1.9 billion industry with 40,000 employees across the country.⁷⁸ Through collaborative and empowering engagement, tourism can also help indigenous communities advance their own development and self-determination.



Nature Positive Actions: *Respecting indigenous places*

Leading tour operator Intrepid was one of the first to advise its travellers against climbing Uluru (Ayers Rock) due to its importance to the local Anangu people – the traditional owners of the land. This respect for local cultures, places and customs continues to be a fundamental policy of Intrepid today and remains a key selling point for travellers who wish to learn more while exploring the globe.



‘The SDGs can only be realized with strong global partnerships and cooperation. A successful development agenda requires inclusive partnerships - at the global, regional, national and local levels - built upon principles and values, and upon a shared vision and shared goals placing people and the planet at the centre.’

United Nations, in reference to SDG17 ‘Partnerships for the goals’.



Protecting animals and their welfare



Travel & Tourism can enhance respect for animals by highlighting the need to protect them and their welfare; irrespective of their circumstances. Ensuring there are safeguards in the supply chain that protect their physical and mental wellbeing is imperative as is enabling travellers to identify and avoid supporting harmful practices.

Animal-based attractions and experiences remain popular, with 6 out of 10 tourism excursions involving animals. However, travellers have become increasingly aware of the potential harm caused by some practices with 66% stating concern about how animals are treated.⁷⁹ This is increasingly being recognised at the national level with nearly 40 countries around the world now banning the use of wild animals in circuses.⁸⁰ Adopting safeguards, encouraging suppliers to uphold the animal welfare principles, and auditing animal-based products and experiences will help to protect animals in the supply chain.

Industry guidelines

Industry guidelines, established to help Travel & Tourism businesses navigate the complexities of the topic and safeguard animal welfare, have helped identify poor practice and improve standards (ABTA Animal Welfare Guidelines, 2019⁸¹; SATSA Animal Interaction Charter, 2019⁸²; ANVR Global Guidance for Animals in Tourism, 2019). Aligned trainings⁸³ and specialist supplier auditing have also been produced to help engage stakeholders and encourage compliance.



Nature Positive Actions: *Effective adoption of animal welfare guidelines*

TUI adopted ABTA's Animal Welfare Guidelines and, amongst other initiatives, used them to improve animal welfare in several elephant camps. Its 'Building an Elephant-Friendly Future' initiative provided guidance and support to improve animal husbandry, remove harmful activities and ensure public safety. 'These venues will serve as examples for other camps to replicate so that a growing number of tourists can experience elephants responsibly'.

Protecting threatened species



Nature tourism can support conservation measures through park entry fees, contributions to monitoring programmes and reporting harmful or illegal activities. The presence of tourist groups can deter illegal activities and local income generation discourages communities from taking part in, or condoning, actions that undermine wildlife tourism. In Kenya, half of the Kenya Wildlife Service's annual budget comes from tourism, and this supports management in 39 national parks and reserves. In South Africa, rangers and groups help protect endangered species and provide education and awareness.^{84,85} The Black Mambas Anti-Rhino Poaching group⁸⁶ is a predominantly female group of rangers who provide boots on the ground to physically protect rhinos from poachers and enhance education and awareness on rhinos and their value to the ecosystem.

Ending Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT)

The Buenos Aires Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade⁸⁷ demonstrates industry-wide commitment to ending the trade and sale of unsustainably sourced wildlife and their products and carrying out responsible wildlife-based tourism activities. The Preventing Illegal Wildlife Trade report⁸⁸ provides a list of illegal and unsustainable wildlife products and guidance for tour operators, airlines, and accommodation-providers on practical measures to take. The key recommendations include educating customers and staff on how to identify unsuitable products, establishing and promoting systems for them to report suspected cases, and raising awareness of the issues among customers, staff and wider networks.



Nature Positive Actions: Safeguards for Threatened species

British Airways, Emirates Airline and Etihad Airways are signatories to the WTTC Buenos Aires Declaration, and through this initiative have adopted safeguards to protect threatened species in trade. For example, Etihad Airways restricts the transportation of animals and plants of Threatened species to only those for demonstrable conservation or rescue/rehabilitation purposes.



Investing in nature



By financing practical actions through social impact, Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) schemes, and local nature conservation partnerships, Travel & Tourism can drive positive action to enhance and restore nature.

Wildlife conservation funding through entrance fees to protected areas is a key component of investing in nature but more can be done. Businesses can actively invest in **Nature Positive** actions such as species protection, habitat restoration and community initiatives. For instance, the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of ecosystems, such as wetlands and forests, can improve water security, while the protection of natural carbon sinks such as oceans, coral reefs, forests, swamps and mangroves is vital for capturing and storing carbon (examples of Natural Climate Solutions).⁸⁹ These are also some of the most popular tourism experiences. Ocean tourism is valued at US\$390 billion globally and supports millions of jobs in many developing nations⁹⁰, while coral reefs alone generate US\$36 billion per year in tourism income.⁹¹ Investing in conservation efforts is therefore vital to the economic success of the industry.

Support local conservation efforts



The rise of Social Responsibility reporting is leading more businesses to collaborate with non-governmental and community-based organisations (NGOs and CBOs) to help them deliver their sustainability commitments. A local nature conservation non-profit can become a highly valuable partner to a travel business. Due diligence is essential to ensure that partners are genuine, committed and effective, and internal or external expertise may be required to confirm this. Once a strong collaboration is established, however, it can be a powerful way to maximise impacts and mutual benefits. Customers are likely to return more inspired by nature, and the experience can also result in long-term support for the projects they visit. In this way Travel & Tourism can generate further channels of support for local nature-enhancing organisations, while also offering customers unique and personally fulfilling experiences.



Nature Positive Actions: Nature Positive partnerships

The Barbados Environmental Conservation Trust (BECT) is a local grant-making charity which supports a range of grassroots projects around this island paradise. Since the Trust itself does the work of identifying projects, agreeing objectives, transferring funds, receiving updates and scrutinising reports, a relatively modest donation with minimal internal supervision can provide a substantial boost to important nature protection work. It also establishes a connection with a range of fascinating community projects, from sea turtle nest protection and coral reef restoration to an organic farming hub. BECT is part of the Conservation Collective, a network of similarly structured local foundations around the globe, and Animondial’s Animal Protection Network.



Advance innovation and green technology

The sector can continue to lead environmental innovation and green technology. This can range from adopting compostable packaging and eliminating single-use plastics to more ambitious plans like increasing investment in renewable energy or switching to sustainable fuels. Effective action in one region can be formalised through certification and provides great lessons for other regions. The Costa Rican Sustainable Tourism Council (CRSTC) certifies tourism businesses that offset their carbon dioxide emissions by funding biodiversity protection and restoration projects.⁹² These actions also support the growth of green technology such as wind and solar farms which reduce future emissions.



Nature Positive Actions: Investing in green technology

MSC Cruises has equipped some of its fleet with UV water treatment systems in ballast tanks to prevent invasive species being unintentionally introduced to new waters.

ACCOR’s brand Fairmont has incorporated water filtration taps in guest rooms as part of new construction and renovation standards, to reduce plastic and bottled water as part of its commitment to eliminate all guest-related single-use plastic items.

A photograph of a gorilla sitting in a dense, green forest. The gorilla is the central focus, looking slightly to the left. The background is filled with various green plants and trees, creating a natural and vibrant setting. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

**NATURE POSITIVE
COMMITMENT
BUSINESS SURVEY**

4

To assess the sector’s progress towards protecting and restoring nature, benefitting biodiversity and achieving Net Zero, an independent survey was conducted in March 2022.⁹³ It involved over 180 global Travel & Tourism businesses, ranging from SMEs to multinationals and representing tour operators, travel agents, destination management companies, cruise and accommodation providers.

Travel & Tourism Commitment Overview

Overall, across the sector, there is high-level support for the Nature Positive agenda, with a general understanding of the need to protect nature and the potentially positive role for Travel & Tourism in achieving this. However, there is limited understanding of how to put this commitment into practice, as well as concern over capacity constraints. Often, the actions taken are the more visible, higher profile options while the more deeply integrated, nuanced or forward-looking options are less commonly adopted. Those surveyed emphasise the need for a clear roadmap, practical guidance and tools for identifying opportunities and prioritising actions.

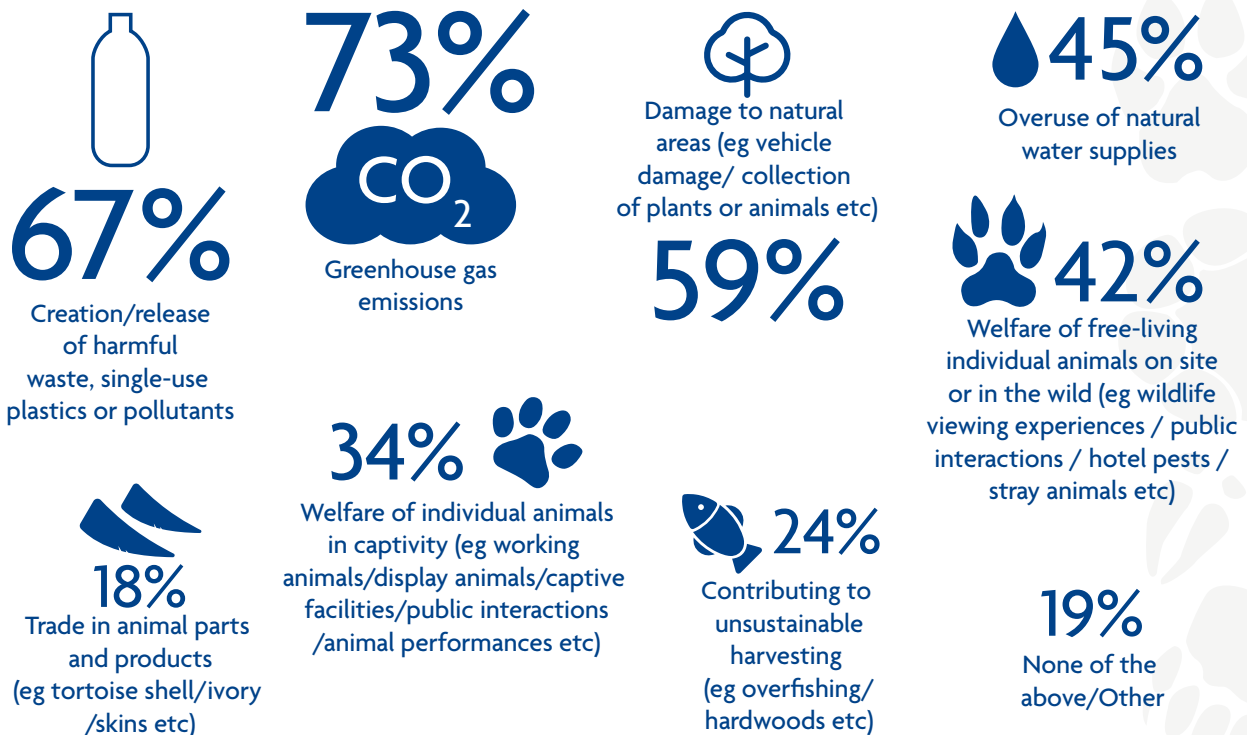
Key Principles

80% of those surveyed correctly defined biodiversity as all living things on the planet. However, interviews revealed limited knowledge of other fundamental concepts, with only 53% of respondents confident they understand the term “Nature Positive”. Respondents stressed the importance of nature to Travel & Tourism and as a solution to climate change. They also emphasised the need for concerted action and accessible, comprehensive guidance defining “Nature Positive” and aiding its application.

Some highlights of responses are included below.

Figure 4 - Negative impacts on animals and nature

Respondents shared the main areas of impact they think their organisations may contribute to.



Results show a lack of familiarity with some of the areas in which the sector is known to have the greatest impact such as illegal trade in wildlife and overharvesting. While some sub-sectors within Travel & Tourism, such as tour agents and travel agents, may feel that they are not connected to these issues, they have a significant influence, with opportunities to reduce their impact through suppliers, contractors and clients.

A recent global survey⁹⁴ that evaluated Travel & Tourism business actions against the SDGs confirmed that despite good intentions, the sector has yet to fully embrace the Nature Positive commitment

Figure 5 - Travel & Tourism actions to safeguard animals and nature: Organisational Integration

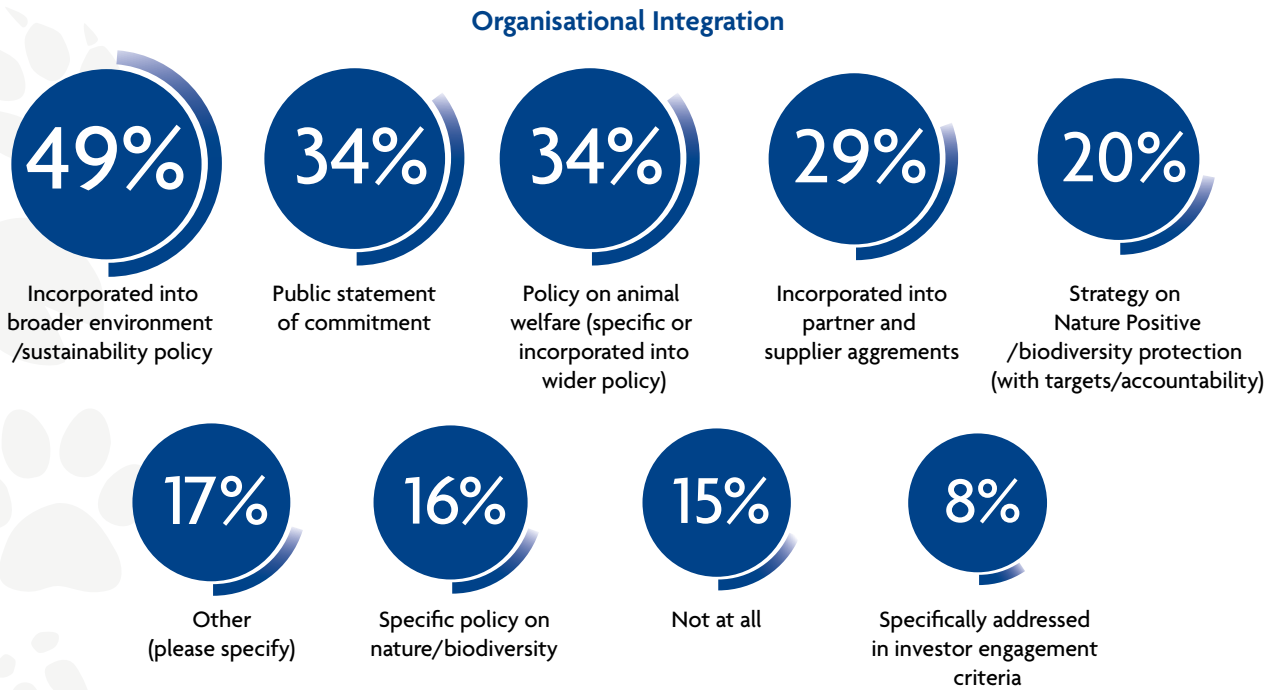


Figure 6 - Travel & Tourism actions to minimise impacts on animals and nature: Reduction Measures



Travel & Tourism can make a positive impact on animals and nature. Actions taken include providing travellers the opportunity to visit responsible nature-based attractions, donating to animal and nature protection projects, and participating in joint actions with governments or suppliers. Improvements could be achieved by prioritising actions according to their effectiveness rather than their simplicity. For instance, direct engagement with suppliers to remove harmful activities, increased accountability and establishing official complaints handling procedures.

Figure 7 - Actions taken to follow a Nature Positive approach: Measures Taken

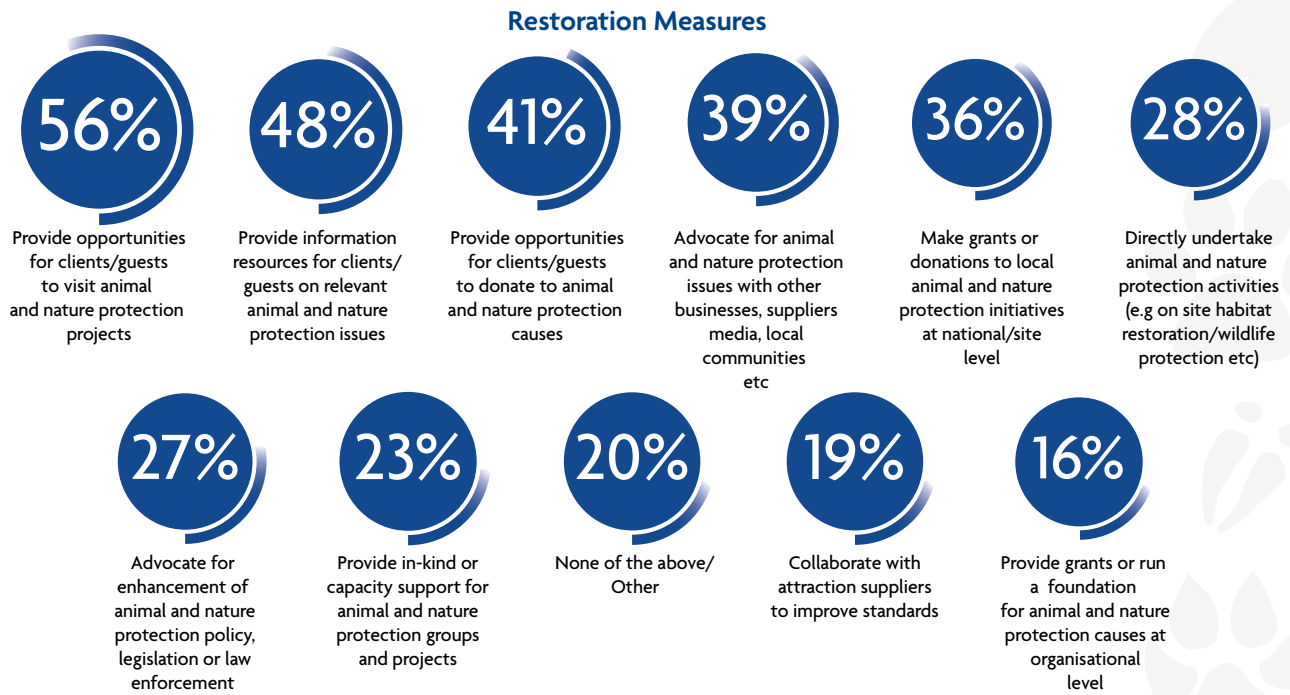


Figure 8 - Travel & Tourism challenges: Implementaion Challenges

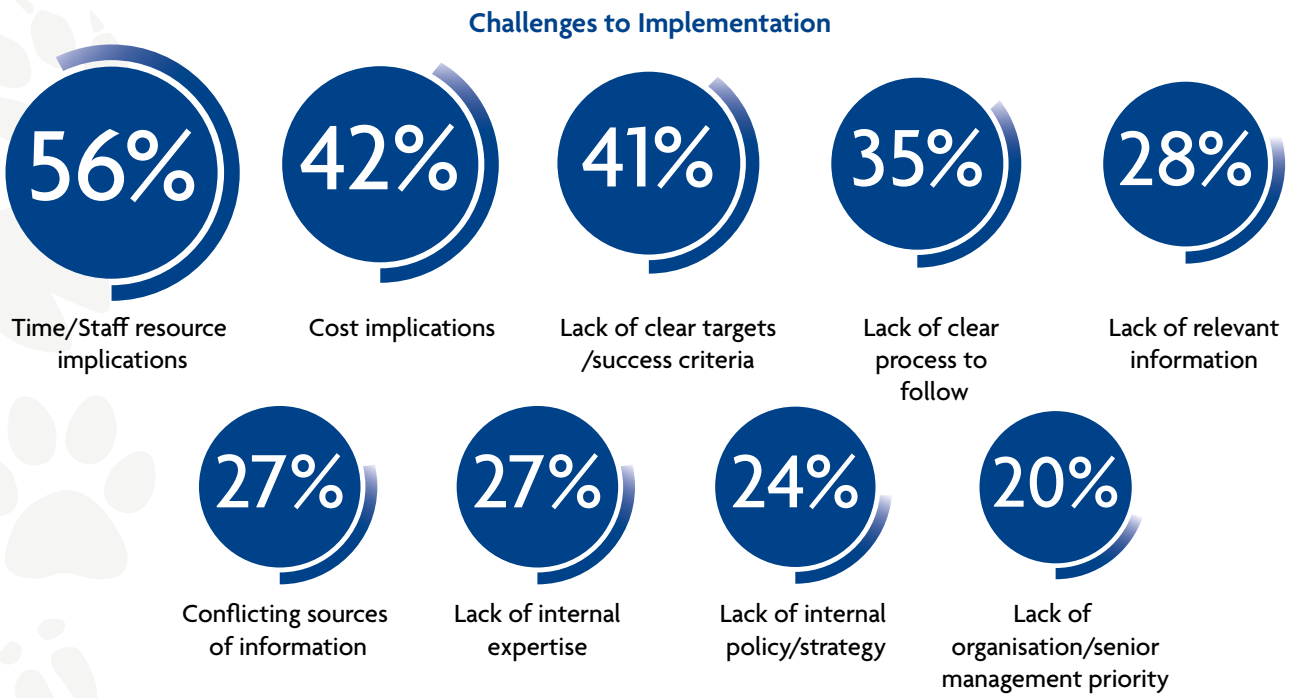


Figure 9 - Travel & Tourism needs: Important Solutions (all)



Key Takeaways

A Nature Positive approach in Travel & Tourism appears to be enacted predominantly through client-based engagement rather than through business operations and destination activities. A variety of operational initiatives, particularly to reduce greenhouse gases, are sometimes undertaken but none are widespread. Some businesses are taking direct action but constructive engagement with suppliers is limited.

Internal resource implications are a concern, however there is also a sector-wide demand for clearer pathways towards integration. Development of relevant, practical and impactful approaches is the priority for many respondents. External pressure from regulatory bodies and customers are also seen as moderately helpful. Interviews confirmed interest in a Nature Positive roadmap with clear targets and guidance for the different types of tourism businesses.

The sector values nature and remains committed to protecting people and planet. However, more accessible guidance is needed on the importance of biodiversity and the components that underpin it. There is also a need to support the sector in taking a Nature Positive approach beyond actions based on public profiles.

The widespread adoption of some actions to support animals and nature demonstrates the sector's commitment in this area. However, there is a lack of information how to pursue such initiatives in the most powerful and effective way. More support on approaches such as operational integration, engaging the supply chain and collaborating with governments would be welcomed. Appreciation of the importance of animal welfare is still developing. Greater awareness of opportunities to make a positive contribution to nature protection and restoration could encourage more initiatives in this area.



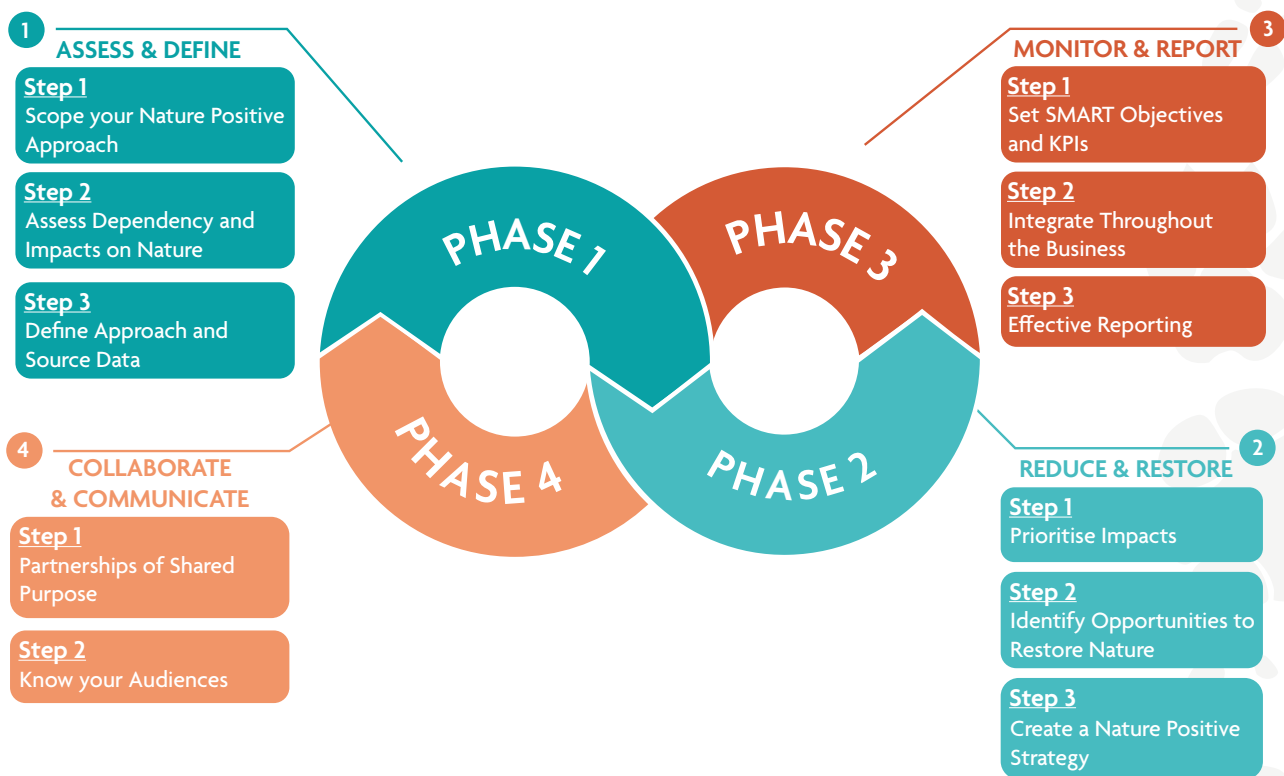
A close-up photograph of a koala clinging to a tree trunk. The koala is positioned vertically, with its head at the top and its body extending downwards. It is holding onto the tree with its claws. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a forest setting. The text "A NATURE POSITIVE ROADMAP FOR TRAVEL & TOURISM" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

**A NATURE POSITIVE
ROADMAP FOR
TRAVEL & TOURISM**

5 The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, nature’s equivalent of the Paris Climate Accords, is likely to require biodiversity to be incorporated into all corporate decisions, with a requirement to disclose operational dependencies and impacts on biodiversity. Similar reporting is already a legal requirement for businesses in the UK and the EU, and other governments and international legal frameworks are expected to adopt similar measures.^{95,96,97,98,99} Voluntary reporting on these areas is increasingly promoted by inter-governmental bodies and international business groups.

This section sets out a four-phase framework with practical steps to guide the Travel & Tourism sector in adopting a Nature Positive approach. These phases include setting out a strategy, identifying essential and optimal actions, rolling out and reviewing the programme, and harnessing all communication opportunities. While the [Annex of this report](#) provides a Toolbox of practical tools and resources to guide and support these actions. This Nature Positive Tourism Roadmap complements other frameworks and procedures and emphasises practical steps to apply often familiar principles in the context of nature and biodiversity. This approach involves all relevant departments, positive engagement with partners and suppliers, and considerations of the destinations visited. Each business is encouraged to create a Nature Positive Strategy, unique to its brand and vision, that follows this Nature Positive Tourism Roadmap. The process is flexible and suitable for companies developing their first strategy and those already experienced in this area.

Figure 10 - Nature Positive Tourism Roadmap: the advised process for any Travel & Tourism business, from SME to multinational, seeking to adopt a Nature Positive Approach.



Source: Adapted from ‘Action Your Nature Positive Pathway’ (ANIMONDIAL 2022) <https://animondial.com>

PHASE 1: Assess and Define

To start the Nature Positive journey, think about how your business will engage with the issue, the connections it has with the natural world, the likely impacts and what measurements and indicators can help measure progress. Throughout this phase, it can be very useful to involve colleagues and stakeholders from across the business to help generate ideas and perspectives.



Without an understanding of their impacts and dependencies on natural capital, many decision-makers will be unaware of potentially significant risks and opportunities and will therefore be at least partly 'flying blind'.

Capital Coalition, 2021



Step 1: Scope the Nature Positive approach

Start by considering the scope of the assessment and overall strategy to clarify the purpose and boundaries of the task ahead. Your assessment will need to cover all business operations and the value chain, as well as destination activities but, to begin with consider business operations in manageable phases. Key questions to consider include:

- What should be included in the assessment? This could be for the whole business operation or specific departments or activities, such as a new construction, product or tour.
- Who are the internal and external stakeholders?
- What parts of the value chain (see below) will be included at each stage?
- How can the value chain be involved in consultation, data collection and assessment processes?
- Is there in-house expertise and capacity to gather and assess all the necessary information? Is a new staff post or external consultant required?
- Is there sufficient buy-in at all levels in the business (including senior management / MD / CEO) to follow through the process?
- What are your operational priorities or the materiality boundaries (see below)?
- What are the spatial boundaries? Bear in mind that natural boundaries may be much wider than operational ones as specific locations may play a vital role in broader landscapes and ecosystems. With operations in multiple locations, decide whether to treat each one separately or as part of a wider area that encompasses several.
- What values will be considered? These can be social, environmental, animal welfare and other values that could influence decisions.
- What is the timescale?
- What is the budget?

Top Tip: Create a scoping framework document to help incorporate and review this information together with feedback from staff, senior management and external sources if appropriate. Refer to [Table 1 in the Toolbox Annex](#), as an initial guide to help identify risk in your operations and value chain.

Documented business support

The Nature Positive Tourism Roadmap is developed specifically for Travel & Tourism, and presents a practical and thorough framework. However, several other standardised approaches exist, describing similar procedures for achieving the same goal but presented with different emphasis and sometimes for different industries. The most thorough and widely used are detailed below.

Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development are internationally agreed guidelines to aid policy- and decision-makers, in both public and private sectors, to minimise the impacts of tourism development on vulnerable ecosystems, habitats of high biodiversity value and protected areas. The Guidelines provide a practical tool and reference for tourism businesses seeking build new infrastructure, operate existing facilities, develop new and improve tours and activities, and develop new products and services in biodiverse or fragile locations with the means to assess the potential impacts; to monitor impacts and compliance; and to implement adaptive management to safeguard tourism and biodiversity. Supplementary manuals address the wide range of instruments and tools available. More information: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/programmes/tourism/tourism-manual-en.pdf> www.cbd.int/doc/publications/tou-gdl-en.pdf

The Natural Capital Protocol is a standardised framework for businesses to identify, value and measure direct and indirect impacts and dependencies on nature. The Protocol is applicable within any business sector and at a product, project or organisational level. The Natural Capital model frames expenditure on nature protection as an investment that will bring continuous returns, rather than a cost that has no long-term benefit. It presents nature's value and humanity's dependence on it in terms that are familiar to businesses, financial institutions and governments. More information: https://capitalscoalition.org/capitals-approach/natural-capital-protocol/?fwp_filter_tabs=training_material

The IUCN Guidelines for planning and monitoring corporate biodiversity performance provide a detailed guide to establishing comprehensive biodiversity reporting in large organisations. It is thorough, clearly structured and is produced by IUCN (the International Union for the Conservation of Nature) – a global, multi-stakeholder organisation that is one of the world's leading authorities on nature protection and enhancement. It is designed to facilitate biodiversity performance assessment at the corporate level and support internal decision-making as well as external disclosure. More information: <https://www.iucn.org/news/business-and-biodiversity/202103/iucn-unveils-new-guidelines-businesses-committed-improving-their-biodiversity-performance> <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/49301>

Business for Nature is a coalition of global businesses and conservation organisations that together demonstrate a credible business voice for nature protection, calling on governments to adopt policies to reverse nature loss in this decade. Providing a library of resources and an implementation framework to help businesses commit and act to reverse nature loss, Business for Nature is the leading voice for business at the COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) meetings to finalise a new global agreement on nature (2022). Business for Nature is hosted at World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). <https://www.businessfornature.org/steps-to-be-nature-positive>

[Refer to the Toolbox, Annexed to this report, to access other Nature Positive Business Resources.](#)

Define the Value Chain

Define your value chain within this scoping phase, recognising dependencies and likely impacts on nature. Traditionally the upstream value chain refers to activities and materials at source, such as building materials, energy or water, while the downstream value chain refers to the consumption of products and services. In some cases, particularly with multiple suppliers and services, these distinctions can be harder to apply, and it can be more helpful to think in terms of before, during and after the travel experience.¹⁰⁰

The scope could initially include only direct activities and those of immediate suppliers, before looking further upstream at the organisations that supply the suppliers or downstream towards customers and end users. Whilst it may simplify the process to focus on discrete sections of the value chain, involving the full value chain in both the scoping and strategy development phases is vital to ensuring an effective Nature Positive approach.



Define Materiality Boundaries

Determine materiality, understanding what issues are important to your business, is fundamental to the development of an appropriate Nature Positive strategy. A material issue is one that can have a major impact on the financial, economic, reputational or legal aspects of a business, as well as on internal and external stakeholders. Factors may be material to the business itself, or to wider societal or nature-related goals.¹⁰¹ In practice, it is not always easy to know exactly what issues are material, but broadly speaking if decision-makers feel that it is something they should consider, then it is a material factor. Where nature-related risks and opportunities are material, organisations should consider describing whether and how related performance metrics are incorporated into remuneration policies.¹⁰²

Involve External Experts

The business will probably want to weigh up the pros and cons of undertaking the assessment themselves or bringing in external consultants. Some data may already be available and regularly analysed, such as nature-based product listings, tourist arrivals at a destination, or food and drink suppliers. However, some data such as baseline biodiversity, threatened species presence or water quality will likely require specialist sampling methods, access to databases or use of mapping and assessment tools. Consider a consultant as they can assist in accessing data that is less readily available and in collecting specific data on the ground to generate reports like site improvement plans and environmental impact assessments. Their knowledge and experience may be the most efficient way of collecting and interpreting relevant data.

Step 2: Assess Dependency and Impacts on Nature

Following the scoping of the assessment and potential risk, think about the relationship between the business and nature at all levels of operation to identify what actions should be taken. This can seem challenging but there are several practical steps that can be taken:

- Become familiar with the concepts of biodiversity, ecosystem services and Nature Positive. The initial sections of this report are a good starting point.
- Think about the realms of nature (freshwater, land, oceans) and major habitats or ecosystems (forests, lakes, grasslands, coasts) in the context of business operations.¹⁰³
- Consider the levels of the business – head office, regional hubs, the value chain, and all destinations visited.
- Identify the value of nature in all those locations: the existence of endemic plant and animal species¹⁰⁴, threatened species¹⁰⁵, protected areas or locations of high biodiversity value.¹⁰⁶ Include both rural and urban locations in the assessment.
- Consider how the value chain, from sourcing raw materials and food to tourism products and the conduct of tourists, may indirectly affect nature.
- Consider the five drivers of biodiversity loss – land use, over-exploitation, climate change, pollution and invasive species – and consider how operations may directly impact on the destination, its natural resources and biodiversity, individual animal welfare, etc.
- What actions are already being taken to mitigate those risks? For instance, regulations and operational protocols to manage energy and water usage, sustainably sourcing food and materials, curbing illegal wildlife trade, etc.
- What further actions could be adopted that provide cost-effective solutions to address identified impacts? For instance, reviewing water use and suppliers' contracts, supporting community-based conservation, etc.
- What opportunities are there for positive action (Chapter 3.2 in this report) to better protect animals and nature?

It is important to distinguish between dependencies and impacts. **Dependencies** are the services that nature provides to the business, such as clean water, food, charismatic animals or beautiful views (*refer to Chapter 2 in this report*). **Impacts** are the ways that business operations affect nature, such as carbon emissions, water use, natural habitat degradation, poor animal welfare or threats to wildlife (*refer to Chapter 3.1 in this report*). These may be linked in various ways. For example, water use at a hotel may depend on forest areas upstream to regulate supply, while also impacting natural wetlands downstream that may be a significant attraction for visitors (another dependency). Impacts and dependencies can also happen far away, such as in locations where food supplies are sourced or where souvenir materials are collected. Institutional understanding of these issues can develop over time, but an overview of a business' main dependencies and impacts is needed to start identifying areas of attention.



Top Tip: Create a table that lists the drivers of biodiversity loss, together with the risks and mitigation options, specific to the sub-sector, to help define business priorities. This can be a living document to be updated as required. ([Refer to Table 2 in the ToolBox Annex](#) for guidance on how to assess Travel & Tourism dependency and impacts on nature, and Table 3 for sub-sector specific guidance).



Refine the assessment

Refine the assessment procedures and outputs as you work through key steps and other guidance available. The assessment is designed to be a fluid and collaborative process which is constantly developed and refined. Initial discussions on who and what to include may change through the process, as may the boundaries of the assessment. As initial priority issues are better understood and addressed, other issues will emerge as new priorities for future iterations.

Step 3: Define Approach and Collect Data

Now it is time to define your Nature Positive commitment. This involves a broad but clear statement of what actions your business intends to take to reduce impacts and proactively restore nature. This can be a pledge, a policy or some other statement at the highest level of the organisation and integrated throughout the business. It should identify key issues that will be addressed and the approaches to be taken, such as engaging the value chain, partnering with non-profits or governmental initiatives, modifying existing operations or setting internal standards. Explicitly state goals and outcomes, as well as a vision for future interactions with nature. The Nature Positive commitment is invaluable for developing and implementing future activities.

The next step is to decide how the activities should be evaluated i.e. what metrics will be used as indicators. Establish baselines for key measurements by taking readings at the beginning of the process. This provides a benchmark from which changes can be evaluated. *Find support on measuring operational impact in [Phase 1, Step 3 of the ToolBox Annex of this report](#).*

Depending on the objective and the nature of the assessment, your business may have most of the data required, or access to it. In other cases, the data may need to be collected as part of this process (directly or under contract), or acquired from a third party (academic institution, national records, etc.). Consider partnerships with local, nature-focused organisations such as NGOs or universities (*Refer to [Table 4 of the ToolBox Annex](#) for further guidance*). These relationships could also provide valuable opportunities throughout the Nature Positive journey. In some cases, the most relevant data may be completely impractical to gather, but a robust report and strategy can still be produced, provided the limitations are noted and alternative metrics identified.

Measuring Impacts

There are several issues to consider when measuring natural systems:

- Remember the importance of identifying changes in the state of nature. This is key to future monitoring, so initial measurements should be fully compatible with activities that track their status over time.
- Factors that may need to be monitored include changes in a species distribution or abundance, changes in land use due to an increase in accommodation provision, increase in water use due to increased visitor numbers, restriction on local community access to resources, etc.
- Determine if applied techniques such as modelling or statistical analysis are required. If so, assess the ability to carry this out in-house or the need to involve external expertise.
- Consider engaging external expertise, such as a local environmental groups, academic institutions, a consultant, or other stakeholders. This may save time and effort and provide a more reliable assessment of which tools are most appropriate for the situation and if applied techniques are required.
- Consider the methodology, geographic area, budget and available resources to ensure that measurements can be undertaken.
- Be aware of regional and national legislation that may apply to some data gathering activities and restrictions in the movement of organic material and water samples.
- Consider a combination of measurements. To ensure a comprehensive evaluation, more than one approach or tool may be needed to cover the full range of biodiversity concerns.

NATOUR IMPACT is an evaluation tool devised specifically to support the Travel & Tourism sector to identify its impacts on nature and define what operational opportunities may exist to better protect biodiversity and restore nature. It considers a business' current policies, safeguards and activities against relevant international standards and targets, sustainable tourism guidance, and expert recommendations providing each business with detailed reporting that highlights priority actions and guides them towards a Nature Positive Tourism approach.

More information: animondial.com/natourimpact

Measuring Biodiversity

Measuring actions that affect nature can be straightforward – the volume of water drawn off from a river or the area of natural land cleared for construction. But, the effects on nature are likely to be more complex. Measuring this can be a challenge, and comprehensive evaluation may not be realistic in the early stages, but it should always be the ultimate goal. Nature Positive Tourism involves balancing damage with repair, and that balance cannot be demonstrated without measuring the effects. Fortunately, the options for measuring and evaluating biodiversity are constantly expanding:

Identifying threatened species

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ provides a list of animal and plant species categorised by their conservation status. Enter the species name into the search box to identify its conservation status. ‘Threatened’ species are those classified as Critically endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) or Vulnerable (VU). The website provides additional information about the species, its distribution and conservation efforts. All species assessments use this valuable data source.

(www.iucnredlist.org).

- **Direct measurements** such as tree cover, species presence and population density have traditionally been measured by experienced staff on site. For instance, identify ‘Threatened’ species or fragile habitat in a location, or species vital to the local community.
- Increasingly, **remote survey methods** are being employed, such as environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling, drone surveys and satellite images. For instance, identify the biodiversity in a location through eDNA sampling.
- **Data analysis** is also evolving with metrics such as Mean Species Abundance providing a simple indicator of biodiversity and the Species Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR) metric quantifying the conservation benefits of individual activities.

Refer to [Phase 1, Step 3 of the ToolBox Annex](#) for examples of ‘Recommended tools to measure national capital, biodiversity and operational impact’



PHASE 2: Reduce and Restore

Once you have completed the assessment and measurement, look at *how* to reduce impacts on biodiversity and take action to restore nature. Actions can be as simple as reducing impact on water quality by reducing pesticide use close to water sources, sourcing goods only from sustainable and ethical suppliers or reviewing all animal-based products against best practice standards.

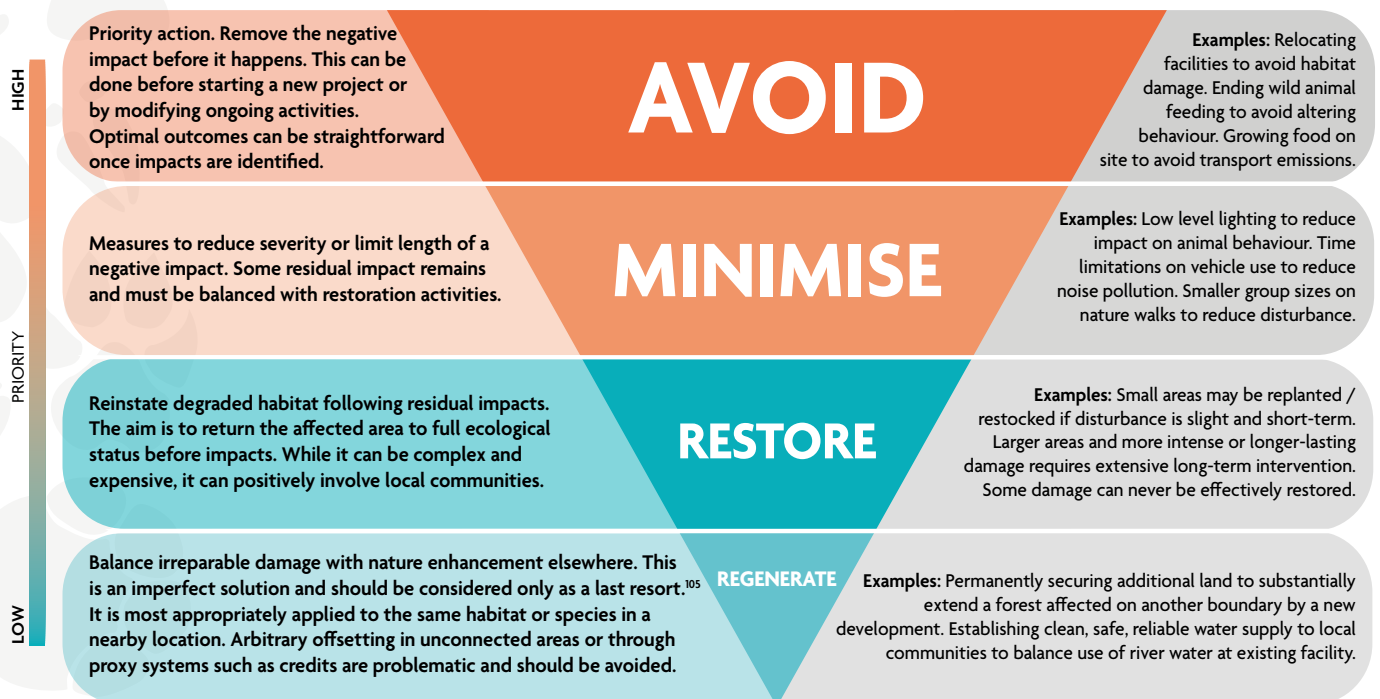
Step 1: Prioritise Impacts

The most established process for deciding on a response to the impact areas you have identified is to follow the Mitigation Hierarchy.

The Mitigation Hierarchy

This is a widely-used tool that provides guidance on minimising risk to biodiversity and emphasises best practice. The hierarchy consists of an ordered list of approaches with the first being the priority or first approach. If that first option is not possible then move to the second. Organisations should move through the hierarchy in this way with the fourth option being a last resort. It is worth noting that impacts on biodiversity and impacts on ecosystems' services can be different, so both need to be considered when identifying impacts and deciding how to mitigate them.¹⁰⁷

Figure 11 – Nature Positive Tourism Mitigation Hierarchy



Source: Adapted from 'A Cross sector Guidance for implementing the Mitigation Hierarchy' (CBSI 2015)¹⁰⁸

Top Tip: For each impact, first consider options for avoidance. If this is not feasible then consider options for minimisation ... and so on down the hierarchy. In some cases it may be useful to combine measures, for instance by minimising impact while putting avoidance measures in place, and then restoring, rather than continuing to do irreversible damage. Biodiversity offsets must never be used to circumvent responsibilities to avoid and minimise damage to biodiversity, or to justify projects that would otherwise not happen.¹⁰⁹

Step 2: Identify Opportunities to Restore Nature

Achieving Nature Positive Tourism goes beyond mitigation. Ensure your activities have an overall net benefit, and this means also identifying positive contributions such as opportunities to restore nature. This could be done through a well-designed and well-implemented philanthropic programme, but restoration is often more impactful, and brings more benefits to the business, when actions are connected with business activities.

Start by assessing dependencies. If your business relies on natural areas or wildlife to draw tourists, these can be ideal focuses to look for restoration opportunities. For example: a mangrove forest to prevent storm damage, rewilding to reintroduce endemic wildlife, or coral reef restoration at dive locations. Financial contributions may be a useful mechanism but, given the local influence that tourism businesses can exert, a dialogue with other stakeholders can reveal other, more fundamental ways of engaging. Changing systems for local community employment, supply sourcing and service provision may be crucial factors, while existing restoration projects may benefit greatly from partnerships that combine Travel & Tourism capacity and resources with local expertise, knowledge and ambition.

Another way to identify opportunities is to consider broader local issues. Even when there is no direct business link, taking part in animal protection or nature restoration work near the area of operations or main offices can access similar benefits such as leveraging synergies and developing positive relationships with local communities. Some of these issues may be relevant in other locations in the area, country or region, with potential to expand the work, share experiences and become a local leader in Nature Positive working.

Natural Climate Solutions


To add an extra level of value, Natural Climate Solutions are actions that benefit nature while also making a measurable contribution to absorbing or storing carbon.¹⁰ These typically include protecting or rehabilitating natural carbon stores (such as forests, mangroves, wild grasslands and marshes) or managing productive areas (such as farmland and forestry plantations) in a way that stores more carbon. Many nature protection and restoration activities tend to improve carbon capture, but Natural Climate Solutions do this in quantifiable ways, and hence can be explicitly included in Net Zero as well as Nature Positive initiatives.

Long-Term Approach


Whatever opportunities you follow, it is important you commit to them in the longer term. Short-term financial contributions rarely make a long-term difference, unless accompanied by a clear plan for how activities will be maintained or sustainable financing mechanisms developed. Businesses have much to gain from building long-term relationships with communities, projects and natural places. Where these are fully integrated into the development of the business, the possibilities for adding value and producing mutual benefits greatly increases.

Animal Protection Network

An award-winning initiative that offers Travel & Tourism a resource of meaningful, nature-based, animal-friendly, global experiences to incorporate into tours and holiday itineraries, or benefit from in-kind and financial support. Carefully selected and endorsed by ANIMONDIAL, these experiences are guaranteed trouble-free. More information: <https://animondial.com/animal-protection-network>



Top Tip: Look at existing activities and networks with a Nature Positive mindset and consider that these can be quite specific to the individual site, either because of unique natural features, local culture, or influential individuals. Excellent opportunities can be found opportunistically through personal contacts or community groups but do your due diligence to ensure that the benefits to nature are genuine. Refer to [Table 4 in the ToolBox Annex](#) for 'Useful resources to identify positive contribution opportunities.'



Step 3: Create a Nature Positive Strategy

Consider all objectives, internal capacity, available budget and other constraints. The best approach could be to minimise impact in the short term while implementing alternative procedures to avoid the impact in future and restore any damage done in the meantime. Urgently address major impacts on nature. These should be the highest priority. Some lower priority actions can be planned for a second wave of actions if capacity for immediate responses is limited. Initiate proactive measures – to restore nature as well as reduce damage – at an early stage in the process. Very few businesses can run without any negative impacts on nature, so it is vital to address impacts and also have restorative actions in place to achieve Nature Positive goals. Balance the severity of different effects against the ease or speed with which they can be addressed to achieve quick wins as you progress to bigger challenges. Consider taking action in different areas of the business and with different approaches, in parallel or in sequence, and drawing on different resources. Manage capacity strategically to achieve the greatest benefits in the shortest time.

Management and Internal Policy

In some cases, the organisation is directly responsible for the activities and their impacts. This is typically the case in areas like waste disposal, energy use and water consumption, and biodiversity at offices. Nature Positive plans can lay out a clear path to deal with such issues. An important step is to mainstream biodiversity values throughout business operations and decision-making. Educating staff across all functions of the business, and partners throughout the value chain, will raise their environmental awareness and help them develop a greater understanding of the impacts they may have on biodiversity and nature.

Top Tip: Appoint biodiversity champions to engage colleagues, suppliers, the local communities and the client to raise environmental awareness. Investment in nature restoration can also encourage or enhance local guardianship of key species and wild places.

Nature Positive Actions: *The Travel Corporation sustainability integration*

The Travel Corporation's sustainability efforts are guided by one five-year sustainability strategy: How We Tread Right (HWTR). It focuses on 11 goals anchored to selected UN SDGs, all developed in consultation with the brand leaders. HWTR is directed at the group level by a Chief Sustainability Officer and executed at the brand level with support from brand Sustainability Officers, to ensure the strategy goals are achieved and embedded throughout the company.



Local and Global Initiatives

Committing to local and global initiatives that include criteria for biodiversity and sustainability reporting can be a good way to establish clear principles and processes. It also promotes accountability and reporting and provides a strong message for internal and external communications. These can range from high-profile global initiatives such as the UN Global Compact¹¹¹, World Business Council on Sustainable Development¹¹² or Business for Nature¹¹³ through to national associations and local partnerships and alliances.

Supply Chain Management

Contacting suppliers can initiate a discussion about their sustainability and Nature Positive actions and help identify ways to reduce impact. Information can be requested about issues like energy supply, procurement policy, local product sourcing, sustainability accreditation, etc. Changing suppliers who do not meet expectations can seem like the easiest way to resolve issues, but engaging with existing suppliers and encouraging them to improve can strengthen business relationships and raise standards across the industry.

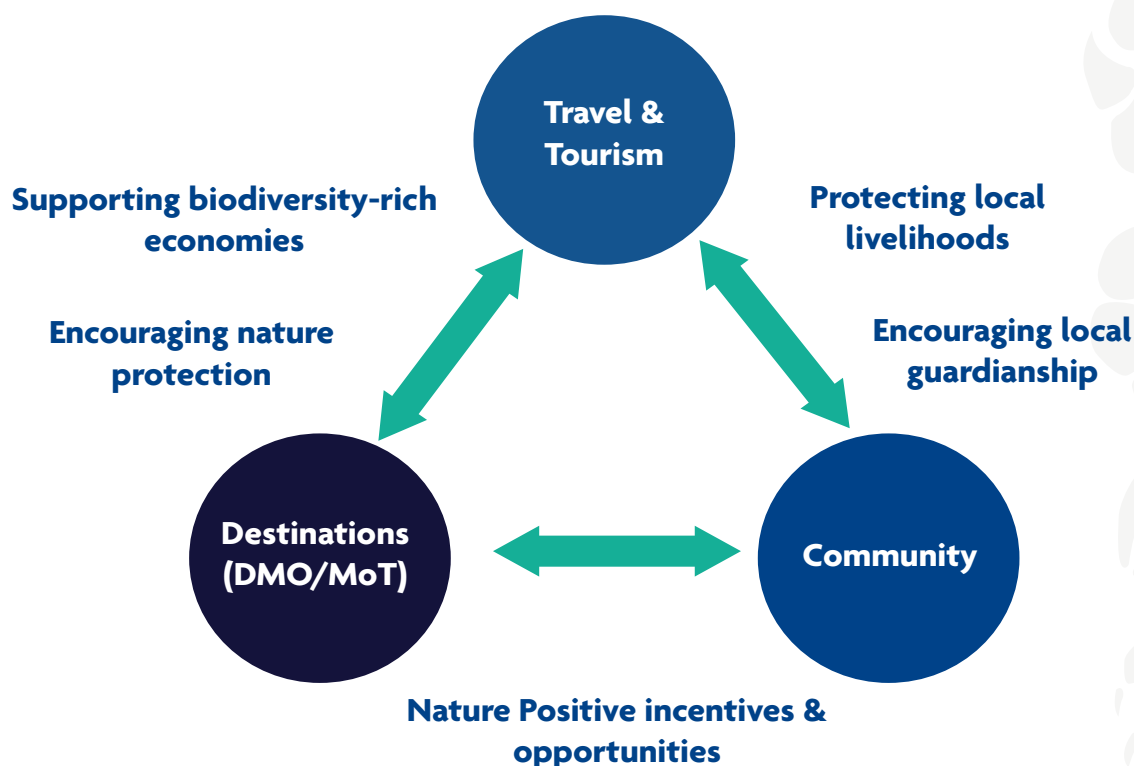
Relationships with Destinations

Building proactive relationships with stakeholders in destinations can be a simple and is usually the most effective approach to promote the protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems¹¹⁶. It can be particularly beneficial to connect with indigenous people, harnessing and supporting their knowledge and understanding of the natural environment and supporting them in protecting biodiversity on their ancestral lands through both traditional and innovative means. Developing relationships with others, such as NGOs, in the conservation area can be productive and maximise impact. Support can also be provided through Destination Management Organisations that are trying to minimise industry impacts on the environment and biodiversity. Most national governments have a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP – as set out in the Convention on Biological Diversity) that identifies fragile habitats or threatened species, as well as conservation agencies that run projects and initiatives to protect and restore biodiversity.^{117,118} This provides Travel & Tourism businesses with an opportunity to support positive actions and directly benefit destinations visited.

Responsible Sourcing of Seafood

Global fisheries currently provide one-sixth of global protein consumed¹¹⁴, but one-third of commercial fish stocks are fished at unsustainable levels, with 90% fully exploited as of 2018¹¹⁵. Sourcing sustainably and supporting marine protected areas will help the recovering of fish stocks. In response to the demand for sourcing sustainable seafood, UK government agency Seafish has developed a guide to sustainable and responsible sourcing for the UK Seafood industry. This guide lists available information sources, from its own data and elsewhere, to enable seafood buyers to understand sustainable and responsible sourcing concepts and apply as appropriate to their business (Seafish Industry Authority 2021). [Refer to Phase 2, Step 1 of the ToolBox Annex to access the Guide and read the case study from Relais & Chateaux.](#)

Figure 12 – Nature Positive Tourism approach in destinations



The diagram demonstrates the nature-related opportunities for the private sector by working in partnership with destination authorities (such as the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Destination Management Organisation (DMO) or Ministry of Environment) and community-based groups or projects to better protect biodiversity and restore nature.

Dominican Republic

The Foundation arm of the Puntacana Group works with local resorts to support many social and environmental projects. One of these involves paying local fishermen to catch lionfish, an invasive species with a negative effect on the marine ecosystem. This supports local livelihoods and restores natural habitats that form part of the destination's appeal to tourists. (<https://www.puntacana.org/en/>)

Top Tip: 10 Ways to Protect and Restore Biodiversity

1. Reduce energy consumption
2. Reduce your carbon footprint
3. Reduce water use, recycle grey water and capture and reuse rainwater
4. Reduce single-use plastics
5. Go green at your offices and destinations. Look at installing green walls, green roofs other simple biodiversity boosting improvements
6. Purchase certified sustainable products wherever possible
7. Support sustainable local suppliers
8. Help end the exploitation of wild animals and plants and illegal wildlife trade
9. Support community-based nature conservation initiatives
10. Develop links with the local community to promote a Nature Positive approach

Refer to **Phase 2, Step 1 of the ToolBox Annex** for examples of 'Standards and frameworks for evaluating, managing monitoring and reporting environmental impacts'



PHASE 3: Monitor and Report

Defining the baseline and monitoring is crucial when seeking to minimise operational impact on nature. It is vital in determining whether targets are being met and whether chosen measures are effective.

Externally, investors and other stakeholders need to understand how an organisation measures and monitors its nature-related risks and opportunities (Global Biodiversity Framework). The UNWTO Guidebook: Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations (2004) may provide useful support¹⁹.

Step 1 - Set SMART Objectives and KPIs

Establish an appropriate monitoring plan consistent with strategic planning to simplify reporting. Consider the following in the context to the business operation, the scope of the assessment(s) and the required capacity:

1. Indicators – *What* will be measured (e.g. operational impact on biodiversity).
2. Methods – *How* will it be measured (e.g. eDNA sampling).
3. Timing/Frequency – *When* will measurement begin, at what frequency and over what timeframe (e.g. monthly from start of next financial year for 24 months).
4. Roles and responsibilities – *Who* will undertake the measurement (e.g. in-destination university partner).
5. Location – *Where* will it be measured (e.g. in local village and community nature reserve).

Once you have identified targets to manage the nature-related risks and opportunities, allocate resources and measure progress against those targets. These Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) can be shaped by applying the SMART framework to track the success of your Nature Positive Strategy. Consider chosen indicators against the following:

Specific – focus in on a clear indicator and an identified target.

Measurable – use a defined metric or set of metrics. Refer to a baseline and benchmarks to provide comparisons.

Attainable – ensure the objective is achievable given business resources.

Realistic – ensure it is possible given market conditions and supplier relations.

Timebound – set a deadline for achievement - (e.g. by 2030 nature is visibly and measurably on the path of recovery, Global Goal for Nature, Figure 1).

For example, if a cruise business commits to reducing noise pollution from ships, the objective could be to achieve an 80% decrease in noise levels in 50% of the fleet by the end of 2025 through the use of noise reduction technology. The KPIs could be the number of boats fitted with noise reduction systems, and the noise level at 100 metres measured by hydrophone at average cruising speed in open water.



Top Tip: Trial selected KPIs to ensure effectiveness before company-wide implementation. When applied, monitoring of actions and outcomes should be regular and consistent to allow trend analysis and reporting.



Step 2 - Integrate Throughout the Business

Success is dependent on objectives and KPIs being implemented throughout the business. While KPIs may differ between departments, it is vital that all departments and operations are involved to ensure a cohesive approach. Internal guidance should clearly state the respective KPIs by department, indicating who is responsible for what action and when it is required.

Involve Colleagues

Engage relevant colleagues early in the process to help identify appropriate KPIs. Support and encourage staff to ensure effective delivery of actions and continued improvement. Conduct regular reviews with active evaluation and reporting to help identify what is working and what needs changing.

Involve Suppliers

Integrate the organisation's KPIs through the value chain. KPIs must be relevant and aligned to the respective business type (e.g. transport provider or Destination Management Company) and the nature impact or enhancement under consideration. While agreements with suppliers should be discussed and agreed, they can also be backed up by third party review (e.g. animal welfare auditing) and contractual requirements. Explaining organisational Nature Positive commitments to suppliers in all areas could encourage them to raise standards and start adopting a Nature Positive approach themselves.



Nature Positive Actions: Local KPI report

Each one of Marriott International hotels complete its own reporting on local ecosystem restoration activities. This recognises the diversity in biodiversity, not just in different global destinations, but also in urban locations versus more rural locations. This is fed back periodically to the global team and included in annual sustainability and investor reports.

Refer to [Table 5 in the ToolBox Annex](#) to find our Nature Positive Tourism Integration Checklist, to help you implement your commitment and strategy throughout the business.

Step 3 - Effective Reporting

A credible report should be honest and evidenced. Aim to balance celebration of success with accountability for any poor performance. Include a set of new commitments to address shortcomings based on the lessons learned.

Include the objectives and actions by department, and of the business as a whole. Present performance alongside each respective target, including an evaluation of progress and reference to data sources, baselines and collection methods. Use quantifiable results as much as possible, and support these with qualitative data such as case studies. Note NGO and community partnerships as well as suppliers and auditors can support the provision of qualitative impacts against KPIs.

Refer to [Phase 3, Step 3 of the ToolBox Annex](#) to find useful resources to guide on nature-related disclosure. This includes the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) recommendations for nature-related disclosure, compatible with Nature Positive Tourism.

Baselines and Intensities

When reporting on measurements, consider what they mean compared to previous situations and previous company activity.

Baseline measurements should be taken as early as possible and before starting any new project (see Phase 1, Step 3). These early results record what the situation was before activities began, enabling businesses to understand the true impact of their activities and their efforts to mitigate them.

It can also be important to compare measurements to features of the business, to give a realistic guide to performance. For example, a hotel may introduce water-saving measures and see its water consumption rise by 20% in the next year, but if it has doubled room numbers in the same period, this suggests the reduction measures are very effective. An intensity ratio helps track these relationships over time, for instance reporting energy consumption against annual turnover, or water consumption per person-night.

ESG Reporting

Biodiversity investment is a growing market, with regulatory frameworks including the EU Taxonomy and initiatives such as the Finance for Nature pledge expecting businesses to incorporate both climate mitigation and biodiversity restoration as part of their reporting. The ESG framework can help lay out a report in line with investor preferences, under focus areas of Environmental (biodiversity, energy, waste, carbon), Social (human impact on employees, communities, suppliers, customers), and Governance (business accountability and risk management procedures, team leads, financial performance). The business’ Nature Positive objectives and aligned SDGs can fall into these three main headings, with a verified or audited account of activities and achievements. The Nature Positive approach is therefore

compatible with ESG reporting.



Nature Positive Actions: Carnival Corporation

Carnival Corporation reports using the ESG framework to separate individual biodiversity goals. An example within Governance is the inclusion of its environmental compliance, protection and sustainability priority within its Business Partner Code of Conduct & Ethics. Under Environment, its Biodiversity & Conservation commitment separates clear measurable actions under “2030 goals” and “2050 aspirations”. Its Foundation programme for community-based projects is reported under Social.

PHASE 4: Collaborate & Communicate

This section offers recommendations on how Travel & Tourism businesses can maximise the benefits of its initiatives by collaborating with others and inspiring change through effective, engaging communication.

There are many benefits to business collaboration to achieve Nature Positive goals. This shared mission unites the Travel & Tourism sector and demonstrates collective impact. For businesses with limited resources, it is also an opportunity to form complementary and empowering partnerships to influence meaningful change. For larger companies, it is an opportunity to become an industry leader, influence policymaking and encourage a greater commitment from governments to protect nature.

Step 1: Partnerships of Shared Purpose

Use stakeholder mapping to identify businesses or organisations that share your vision and goals. Working together, in partnership, is a resource-efficient and effective way to support the delivery and achievement of collective objectives. Below are potential Nature Positive Tourism partners.

Travel & Tourism peers may face the same challenges, supply chains, production methods or sites. Sharing information and approaches, as well as resources, can be invaluable to achieving mutual goals.

Travel Trade Associations (TTAs) have a vital role in supporting their membership with guidance on sustainability, animal welfare and pursuing Nature Positive Tourism.

Local Communities & NGOs are invaluable in supporting implementation and monitoring of in-destination conservation actions by providing local knowledge and expertise. Build strategic and mutually beneficial partnerships with them to deliver meaningful impact at community level while providing a credible and inspiring demonstration of business commitment to nature.

Educational institutions can provide science-based knowledge, credibility, finance and delivery capacity to support destination nature-based activities.



Nature Positive Actions: ‘Wave of Change’ programme

With more than 80% of hotels on the beachfront, Iberostar decided to focus on the conservation of seas and oceans through the Wave of Change initiative. The programme includes the creation of a coral nursery in one of the Iberostar hotels in the Dominican Republic, and research into sea grasses through the creation of the ‘Cátedra Iberostar



Suppliers are often shared across Travel & Tourism businesses, so a collective effort can help manage transitions and encourage suppliers to consider risk mitigation measures. For example, a hotel will need to consider its supply of bottled water, textiles, cleaning products, cocoa, coffee, seafood, sugar, etc. – all likely to impact nature. Working in collaboration, the hotel and suppliers can implement complementary mitigation efforts to change usage and sourcing and optimally reduce impacts. This approach helps to maintain strong partnerships between businesses and their suppliers, and a more desirable outcome than an immediate supplier change, or ‘stop-sale’, which should only be considered as a last resort.

Destination authorities can play a defining role, delivering safeguards and improving practices to mitigate nature related risks and identify opportunities. Travel & Tourism can galvanise the commitment of governments (in particular, Ministries of Environment and Tourism, as well as protected areas’ agencies) to better protect their natural heritage. For instance, Travel & Tourism could be a major influencer in the global goal to protect at least 30% of land and sea by 2030.¹²⁰ This goal is regarded as necessary to avert the crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. Governments can implement fairer trade deals, stimulate local livelihoods and facilitate the establishment of small-scale cooperatives that support local communities and discourage damaging practices.

Cross-sectoral alliances can deliver effective and sustainable solutions when addressing shared issues of collective responsibility that may seem insurmountable for one business. These issues include animal and nature protection in Travel & Tourism.

Nature Positive Actions: *Cross-sector approach to protecting sperm whales*

Following discussions with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Pelagos Cetacean Research Institute, OceanCare and WWF Greece, MSC Cruises agreed to support efforts to preserve the endangered sperm whale population in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. This was achieved by simply re-routing ships at crucial times of year.

“Working closely with experts in the field to identify and implement meaningful action is how we can best do this. We are pleased to support this initiative, recognising that with small changes we can support the conservation of this important sperm whale population.”

Linden Coppell, Director of Sustainability, MSC Cruises.



Delivering a truly responsible and sustainable tourism concession not only requires an assessment of the tourism activity to avoid or minimise potential impact, but also necessitates an understanding of the environment in which it operates, any key species and conservation efforts to protect them, and the involvement of local communities that often live in the vicinity. Building tourism partnerships, or cross-sectoral alliances, will help ensure informed decisions as well as identify nature-related opportunities to better protect the biodiversity and restore nature in the destination. Travel & Tourism is encouraged to consider such cross-sectoral alliances as part of their Nature Positive Tourism output.

Step 2: Know Your Audiences

Before launching your business commitment, decide who needs to be informed and how this will be done. Remember that you can lead by example by sharing achievements, challenges and failures which help others improve their

commitments and Nature Positive activities. These lessons can even drive policy change.

WHO ARE OUR AUDIENCES?

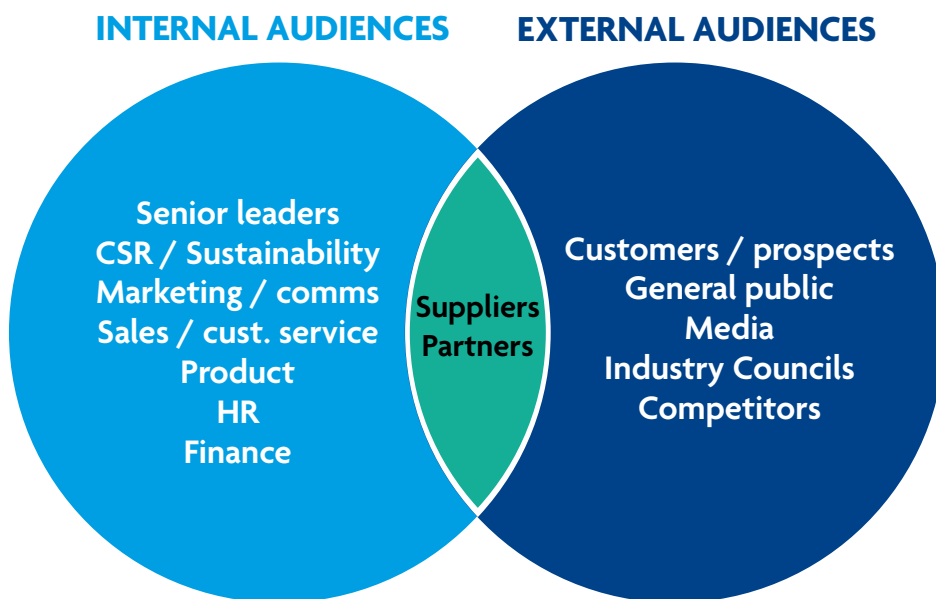


Figure 13 - Key internal and external audiences

Diagram provides an example of the key audiences that may need to be engaged about the organisation’s Nature Positive Tourism actions (recognising that suppliers and partners could fall into both categories).

Internal Audiences

Ensure colleagues, board members and shareholders are aware of and understand the organisation’s Nature Positive commitment and desired outcomes well ahead of a public launch. This can help secure support, particularly from those with specific roles and responsibilities in its delivery, and will likely galvanise positive employee sentiment.

Shared Audiences

Shared audiences are those stakeholders with whom businesses collaborate to deliver operations. This includes suppliers who provide products and services, regular and high value clients, other closely aligned partners and even relevant individuals such as celebrities who provide endorsements. Inform these audiences of the organisation’s Nature Positive commitment prior to the public launch to ensure their buy-in and alignment, and encourage their participation.

External Audiences

This is perhaps the most important audience of all - direct customers and sales prospects, already interested in a company’s products and services. It also includes the media. Other external audiences include Travel & Tourism peers, Travel & Tourism policy bodies and destination management organisations, all of which are important collaborators and can help promote an organisation’s Nature Positive commitment to wider audiences. (See Phase 4, Step 1 - Partnerships of Shared Purpose’)

Respect, monitor and engage positively with this audience. Ensure messaging for external audiences is aligned and consistent in all interactions. External audiences can also help collect data for reporting

purposes (see Phase 3, Step 2 - Monitor & Report). For example, sales numbers can demonstrate the popularity of a new Nature Positive product range.

Nature Positive Actions: *Community consultation*

Airbnb ran a community survey to find out what experiences and socially-conscious actions were considered most important. The highest marks were awarded to protecting biodiversity and the environment. The study also suggested that people are more connected to biodiversity and nature

Effective Internal Communication

Draft the Nature Positive commitment outlining the business position and overall objective on the topic. The policy or statement can be tailored for both internal and external audiences, but the overall message should match. Produce the policy in line with an implementation strategy for dissemination and adoption through all departments.

Effective External Communication

Consider a communications plan, and a Key Messaging Guide (see Top Tip box). This plan needs to include positive messaging and how to respond to negative feedback. Good practice is to ensure sales and marketing teams have basic guidance to justify internal animal and nature protection decisions to help ensure careful handling of customer complaints or other external challenges from the media or campaigning organisations.

Consider the role of social media. Report and communicate honestly and transparently. Build relationships with trusted external advisors (independent consultants, scientists or NGOs) who can help validate your business position.

(Refer to Section 4.2 of the ToolBox Annex 'Know your Audiences' for useful tips on how to ensure effective communication of the business Nature Positive commitment internally and externally, and how to handle difficult complaints and media enquiries).

Top Tip: Create a Key Messaging Guide: It can be worth producing a concise internal document outlining the Nature Positive commitment, policy, approved messaging and imagery use. This provides all teams a valuable reference point for consistent communications needs. A Key Messaging guide can support the delivery of, and proactive response to external communications, including marketing and advertising material, customer questions or complaints, media queries, recruitment drives, supplier engagement and stakeholder reporting. It can also outline the process by which any communications-related enquiries or complaints are handled, to help prevent issues from escalating and ensure positive external engagement and uphold good brand reputation.

Refer to the ToolBox of Nature Positive Resources in the Annex of this report, for practical guidance and to aid transition.



RECOMMENDATIONS



6

Adopting a Nature Positive Tourism approach, while crucial, does not need to be complicated.

Many of the business actions required to mitigate nature-related impacts will likely already be implemented, and opportunities to better protect biodiversity and restore nature will be easily identifiable in existing operations and destination activities. So much so, adopting a Nature Positive approach is possible no matter the business size or specialism. The following actions are recommended:

-  **Assess business operations and activities against the five-drivers of biodiversity loss.** Identify the business' nature-related impacts and dependencies. Define SMART targets, and clear, ambitious yet feasible goals. Prioritise actions to address those identified as most harmful, as well as those easily delivered. Combine with your climate change actions.
-  **Work with your destination partners and suppliers to halt any exploitation or degradation of the natural world.** Inform, inspire and empower change through support, encouragement and advocacy.
-  **Commit to mainstreaming and integrating biodiversity safeguards throughout the business and operations.** Make the Nature Positive approach an integral part of your business. From clearing land for construction, to managing the value chain, to product procurement and development, instil a procedure for assessing and avoiding, or minimising, nature-related impacts.
-  **Create a Nature Positive commitment and a strategy through which to achieve it.** Make a clear statement of your goals and intentions. Complement your actions to mitigate nature-related impacts with measurable opportunities to better protect and restore nature. Consider these initially within your existing areas of activity.
-  **Take a proactive role in nature protection and restoration.** Use the unique influence of Travel & Tourism to make the world a better place. Consider destinations visited, sites of biodiversity importance, key species, or opportunities to restore or rewild. Collaborate with local communities and organisations, consult suppliers, and consider opportunities to support wider actions, overcome challenges and deliver more impactful outcomes.
-  **Deliver simple yet informative communication to your shareholders, employees, destination partners and suppliers, affected communities and customers.** Inform them about the business commitment(s), your progress and achievements. Seek to inspire and empower your collaborators, neighbours and customers to better protect animals and nature.

7

ANNEX: TOOLBOX of nature positive tourism resources

To aid the development, integration and application of your business' Nature Positive Tourism approach, a [Toolbox of Nature Positive Tourism Resources is provided in an Annex to this report.](#)

This includes a series of frameworks that demonstrate how the theory in this report can be applied practically, together with some useful resources, support services, and business case studies. This will help businesses to:

- *Scope a Nature Positive Approach*
- *Assess Dependency and Impact on Nature*
- *Define Approach and Source Data*
- *Prioritise Impacts and Opportunities*
- *Identify Opportunities to Restore Nature*
- *Integrate the Nature Positive Commitment Through the Business*
- *Effective Reporting*
- *Know Your Audiences*
- *Glossary (defining words and terms used)*
- *Case studies from other industry sectors*

issues than they are to climate change.

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AUTHORS

Christopher Imbsen

Director of Sustainability
World Travel & Tourism Council

Daniel Turner

Director
ANIMONDIAL

Helen Usher

Director
ANIMONDIAL

EDITORS

Birka Valentin

World Travel & Tourism Council

Lethabo-Thabo Royds

Senior Manager, Policy & Programme
World Travel & Tourism Council

Jonathan Mitcham

Senior Research Analyst
World Travel & Tourism Council

David Jay

ANIMONDIAL

DESIGNERS

Zoe Robinson

Andrew Currie

Senior Designer
World Travel & Tourism Council

IMAGES

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ANIMONDIAL is a consultancy which has provided impartial advice and practical guidance on animal and nature protection in Travel & Tourism for over 20 years.

For more information, visit: Animondial.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Joshua Allmey
ANIMONDIAL

Paul Cawsey
Organeco

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