# A WWF BRIEFING FOR BUSINESS & FINANCE UNLOCKING A NATURE-POSITIVE ECONOMY



BUSINESS AND FINANCE FACE A DOUBLE EMERGENCY



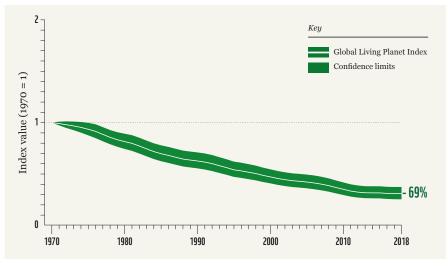
Nature loss and climate breakdown exacerbate each other, posing existential risks for business and finance – and must be addressed together.

Increasing demands for energy and food, and the unsustainable use of our planet's resources, are driving nature loss and climate change that threaten not just enterprise and prosperity but our very survival.

As we lose natural diversity and degrade ecosystems, we radically restrict opportunities to harness **nature-based solution**<sup>1</sup> to climate change and other societal challenges. In turn, climate change further drives nature loss and lessens the resilience and productivity of natural systems.

In its most comprehensive analysis to date, the 2022 Living Planet Index shows an average 69% decline in relative abundance of monitored wildlife populations around the world between 1970 and 2018. While Latin America shows the greatest regional decline in average population abundance at 94%, freshwater species populations have seen the greatest overall decline at 83%.

The global Living Planet Index



In parallel, the Earth has warmed by 1.2°C since pre-industrial times. And with current pledges insufficient to achieve the Paris Agreement target of limiting warming to 1.5°C, we risk catastrophic warming of 2.7°C or more<sup>2</sup>.

Together, these dramatic changes herald the unravelling of nature and ecosystems. And despite a growing array of political and private

LIVING PLANET
REPORT 2022
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sector commitments, without immediate and unprecedented action, we stand little chance of reversing nature loss or climate change.

Explore **WWF's latest Living Planet Report** to find out more about the diversity of solutions, values and voices that we need to bring together to build a future in which people and nature thrive, including examples from the Amazon, Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Kenya, Indonesia and Zambia.







# **COMMIT, ACT, ADVOCATE FOR NATURE**

Business and finance must help restore nature and create equitable, net-zero, nature-positive markets and economies.

Companies and investors must reduce nature- and climate-related risks and future-proof businesses and portfolios by immediately making commitments, taking action, and calling for change.

## **COMMIT**

Companies and financial institutions should assess impacts and dependencies on nature using tools like the Natural Capital Protocol<sup>3</sup> and WWF's Biodiversity Guide for Business<sup>4</sup>, alongside accounting for and disclosing greenhouse gas emissions. They should then commit to protecting nature<sup>5</sup> and operating within planetary boundaries by setting ambitious emissions reduction targets through the Science-Based Targets initiative<sup>6</sup> and the Financial Institution Net-Zero Standard<sup>7</sup>, and by joining the Science Based Targets Network<sup>8</sup> which is helping companies develop and set targets for nature.



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### **ACT**

Companies must deliver on commitments to nature by using tools and approaches such as the Accountability Framework<sup>9</sup> and the WWF Water Risk Filter<sup>10</sup>, and participating in initiatives such as TRADE Hub<sup>11</sup>. This includes developing and implementing nature-positive strategies and circular business models<sup>12</sup>, realising deforestation- and conversion-free supply chains<sup>13</sup>, engaging in collective action and jurisdictional approaches<sup>14</sup>, and investing in nature-based solutions<sup>15</sup>. And joining WWF's Climate Business Network<sup>16</sup> and using our Beyond Net-Zero<sup>17</sup> guidance will help companies reduce emissions across value chains in line with a 1.5°C pathway.

Financial institutions must factor natural capital and climate- and nature-related risks into financial decision-making, and scale **investment in net-zero and nature-positive activities**<sup>18</sup>, including by adopting the **Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures**<sup>19</sup> framework for managing and disclosing climate risks, and aligning portfolios for a 1.5°C future through initiatives such as the **Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance**<sup>20</sup> and the **CDP-WWF Temperature Rating**<sup>21</sup> tool on the Bloomberg Terminal.

Companies and financial institutions should also track performance and publicly report on progress by following guidance from the **Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures**<sup>22</sup> and aligning with reporting norms emerging from the **International Sustainability Standards Board**<sup>23</sup>.

For more information on acting for nature, explore **Business for Nature's guidance**<sup>24</sup> and these company case studies on integrated action for climate and nature<sup>25</sup>.

# **ADVOCATE**

Companies and financial institutions must also advocate for nature, as well as shape **robust climate policies**<sup>26</sup> that drive action for a 1.5°C future. This includes supporting the **Leaders' Pledge for Nature**<sup>27</sup> and specific initiatives such as the **business manifesto for a plastic pollution treaty**<sup>28</sup>, and joining the Business for Nature call on governments to adopt **ambitious policies that support nature and busines**<sup>29</sup>. The immediate priority is securing an agreement on a **global goal for nature**<sup>30</sup> akin to the Paris Agreement 1.5°C target that acts as a North Star for transformative action on nature and unleashes a thriving nature-positive economy.

Visit panda.org/naturepositivebusiness for more information.



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Above: Solar panels and Landscape in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. Below: Pluit Reservoir, North Jakarta City, Indonesia.



WWF / Yunaidi Joepo



# **DRIVERS OF CHANGE**

According to the World Economic Forum Global Risks Report 2022<sup>31</sup>, climate action failure, extreme weather, and biodiversity loss, are the top three risks facing humanity in the coming decade.

Land use change resulting from agriculture and deforestation remains the principal cause of nature loss, with food systems responsible for **70% of global biodiversity loss on land and 50% in freshwater**<sup>32</sup>, and around a **third of global greenhouse gas emissions**<sup>33</sup>. In addition, pollution, over-exploitation, invasive species, and climate change are all accelerating nature loss.

Freshwater ecosystems in particular are under severe pressure and face a variety of specific threats, including over-abstraction of water, high-impact hydropower dams, and over-exploitation of sand and gravel.

In the marine environment, overfishing in wild capture fisheries is the primary cause of decline, with more than one in three<sup>34</sup> assessed fish

LAND USE CHANGE
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FOOD SYSTEMS ARE
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AND 50% IN FRESHWATER



stocks overfished. Climate change, habitat destruction, and pollution are also severely affecting ocean productivity.

While climate change is already a major driver of nature loss, unless we limit warming to 1.5°C and deliver net-zero emissions by 2050, it is likely to become the dominant cause of nature loss in the future.

Unless we put nature on a **path to recovery by 2030**<sup>35</sup>, almost **none of the SDGs can be achieved**<sup>36</sup> – in particular food and water security, good health for everyone, poverty alleviation, and a more equitable world.

# THE IMPACTS OF THE DOUBLE NATURE AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY

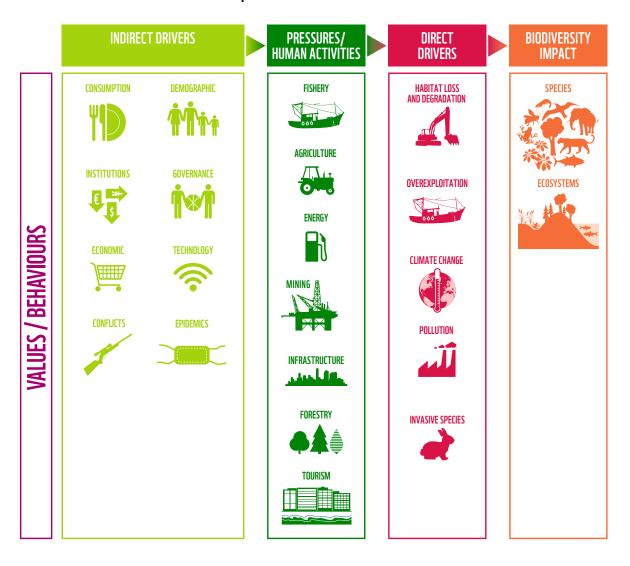
from displacement by extreme weather to soil depletion and zoonotic disease, affect us all but fall disproportionately on the poorest and most vulnerable. And conflict, economic turmoil, and the lingering impacts of COVID-19 continue to disrupt value chains and increase vulnerability.

2030

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# Threats to nature and the drivers and pressures behind them



# WHAT THE DOUBLE EMERGENCY MEANS FOR BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Business and finance depend on nature, a stable climate, and the services that healthy natural systems provide – and protecting nature is an economic imperative.

Nature powers industry and enterprise but we are **using up 'natural capital' and degrading natural systems**<sup>37</sup> faster than nature can replenish and restore them, exceeding Earth's overall biocapacity by at least 75%, and undermining our planet's health and humanity's prospects.

Goods and services that flow from the ocean and coasts, for example, are worth at least \$2.5 trillion each year but business as usual means investors in **companies dependent on the ocean economy risk losing \$8.4 trillion**<sup>38</sup> due to declining ocean health.

In total, around \$44 trillion in annual economic value generation – over half of the world's GDP – is moderately or highly dependent on nature, according to the World Economic Forum **Nature Risk Rising**<sup>39</sup> report.

These sectors rely on either direct extraction of natural resources, or access to ecosystem services such as healthy soils, clean water, pollination, pest control, and a stable climate, whose deterioration is causing significant losses and increasing costs.

Almost every sector is exposed to nature-related risk in some way – either through losing customers, markets, or finance as a result of causing nature loss, or suffering its impacts through disruption to supply chains, markets, and society.

Worldwide, the potential collapse of ecosystem services such as pollination and timber threatens a **\$2.7 trillion**<sup>40</sup> annual decline in global GDP by 2030.

Protecting nature is an economic as well as a moral imperative. Growing consumer demand for sustainable products<sup>41</sup>, increasing government and investor interest in how companies are addressing impacts and dependencies on nature<sup>42</sup>, and rapid developments in technology and data making business activity and ecosystem change more and more visible, all signal that companies and financial institutions must forge a global economy that is equitable, net-zero, and nature-positive<sup>43</sup>.

"BIODIVERSITY AND INTACT ECOSYSTEMS ARE FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENTS FOR OUR WELL-BEING, LIVELIHOODS AND OUR ECONOMIES. WE NEED COLLABORATION TO SOLVE THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE OF NATURE LOSS."

LEYLA ERTUR, HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY, H&M GROUP

# THE THREE LARGEST SECTORS HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON NATURE

TOGETHER GENERATE CLOSE TO \$8 TRILLION OF GROSS VALUE ADDED (GVA)







Reprinted figure from "Connecting global priorities: Biodiversity and human health a state of knowledge review," World Health Organization (WHO) and Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Copyright (2015) 14.

# SECURING AN EQUITABLE, NET-ZERO, NATURE-POSITIVE ECONOMY

Lasting peace and prosperity depend on transformational system change for an equitable, net-zero, nature-positive global economy – and sectors and systems with the biggest impacts present major 'nature-positive' investment opportunities.

Our **economies are embedded within nature**<sup>44</sup> but our economic and financial systems do not recognise that human health, wealth and security depend on safeguarding nature's services, and globally we are spending at least **\$1.8 trillion a year**<sup>45</sup> on environmentally harmful subsidies.

Transitioning to a nature-positive economy requires a 'fundamental, reorganisation across technological, economic, and social factors, including paradigms, goals, and values' according to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

Three socio-economic systems – food, land, river and ocean use; infrastructure and building; and energy and mining – are responsible for the most significant business-related pressures on biodiversity, according to the World Economic Forum **The Future of Nature and Business**<sup>46</sup> report.

Transitioning these systems towards a 'nature-positive' economy – including through ecosystem restoration, nature-positive food production, and circular business models – will cost \$2.7 trillion a year but could generate \$10.1 trillion in annual business value and create 395 million jobs by 2030.



# WHAT IS 'NATURE-POSITIVE' BUSINESS AND FINANCE?

IT MEANS PROTECTING AND RESTORING NATURAL HABITATS, SAFEGUARDING THE DIVERSITY OF LIFE ON EARTH, MAINTAINING NATURE'S SERVICES, AND HALVING THE FOOTPRINT OF PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION SO THAT WE CAN REALISE THE PROMISE OF THE SDGS – PROSPERITY FOR ALL ON A HEALTHY PLANET.







### **ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL REFORM**

Economic and political decision-making has long prioritised marketbased values of nature<sup>47</sup>, such as producing food and energy, at the expense of more diverse values such as climate regulation and cultural identity that lack a market price but are fundamental to our collective well-being.

We need to reshape economic and financial systems so that we move away from a global economy based on the pursuit of indefinite production and consumption and toward sustainable management of the **global commons**<sup>48</sup>.

Reform must include **changing the 'rules of the game'**<sup>49</sup>, properly valuing natural resources and nature's services, pricing environmental externalities into financial and commodity markets, complementing GDP with **new yardsticks of progress**<sup>50</sup> that track well-being and prosperity across generations, and integrating nature, climate, inclusion, and equity into decision-making.

For business and finance, this means assessing and disclosing impacts and dependencies on nature and climate, developing and investing in nature-positive business models and activities, producing goods and services within **nature's limits**<sup>51</sup>, and encouraging more sustainable choices.

# STUDIES EXPLORING HOW TO REACH AMBITIOUS TARGETS FOR BIODIVERSITY

SUGGEST THAT INCREASING
TRADITIONAL CONSERVATION
AND RESTORATION EFFORTS
IS KEY, BUT THIS WILL FAIL TO
BEND THE CURVE IF IT IS NOT
COMPLEMENTED BY A SIGNIFICANT
EFFORT TO ADDRESS DIRECT
AND INDIRECT DRIVERS OF
BIODIVERSITY LOSS<sup>52</sup>.

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# **FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION**

Many contemporary food systems are unsustainable but radical transformation can deliver enough nutritious food for everyone while also helping solve the nature and climate crises.

We need a new **nature-positive model for global food production**<sup>53</sup> that maintains and enhances ecosystem services, increases yields, and restores degraded land, water, and seascapes. Diversification and practices such as agroecology, regenerative agriculture, and sustainable fishing can improve productivity, build resilience to climate change, enhance resistance to pests and disease, buffer economic shocks, and help reconnect fragmented habitats.

Globally, while continuing with business as usual threatens **degradation of** an additional area of land almost the size of South America by 2050<sup>56</sup>, rehabilitating the **52% of farmland that is currently degraded or disused**<sup>57</sup> would alleviate much of the pressure for further conversion of natural ecosystems and support the transition to nature-positive production.

In the Cerrado, for example, restoring degraded land to production would meet the demand for soy three times over<sup>58</sup>. And improving fisheries management<sup>59</sup> would help secure the nutritional needs of hundreds of millions of people worldwide who depend on 'blue' or aquatic food<sup>60</sup>, as well as the livelihoods of 22 million people<sup>61</sup> engaged in small-scale fisheries. Restoration<sup>62</sup> can also contribute more than one-third of the cost-effective climate change mitigation<sup>63</sup> needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

Transformation relies on integrated action, including redirecting agri-food subsidies. For an investment of just an additional \$230 billion<sup>64</sup> – a fraction of the current unpriced environmental and health costs of food systems<sup>65</sup> – we can end hunger<sup>66</sup>, double small-scale producer incomes, support human health, and develop nature-positive food systems that deliver on the Paris Agreement.

# RESPECTING RIGHTS AND INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

Respecting human rights and accounting for diverse values in decisionmaking is a fundamental part of good governance, and can help spark transformative change and unlock new approaches.

As companies and financial institutions seek to restore and invest in nature and support a fair and just transition, they must help catalyse an inclusive 'whole of society' approach that upholds human rights and empowers all of us to act together.

Respecting the rights, governance and leadership of Indigenous peoples and local communities is particularly important, as is supporting the inclusion of marginalised groups. Indigenous peoples and local communities hold lands



# **4U%**AS MUCH AS 40% OF ALL FOOD<sup>54</sup> PRODUCED GLOBALLY BY WEIGHT IS NEVER EATEN

Causing nearly
\$1 trillion in economic
losses and wasted
resources. Without
changes in production,
consumption, and
disposal, including
transitioning to
planet-based
diets<sup>55</sup>, food
production will need
to increase by between
43% and
99% by 2050.

A WWF BRIEFING FOR BUSINESS & FINANCE

that cover at least 32% of the planet's terrestrial realm<sup>67</sup> – over 90% of which are in good or fair ecological condition – and they manage at least 24% of the total above-ground carbon<sup>68</sup> stored in the world's tropical forests. And indigenous knowledge, practices, and values can complement

western science and inform sustainable development.

The 2022 UN General Assembly declaration that everyone, everywhere, has the **right to live in a clean**, **healthy**, **and sustainable environment**<sup>69</sup>, confirms that a healthy environment is a prerequisite for the enjoyment of all human rights. Where this right has already been recognised, it has delivered tangible **benefits for people and planet**<sup>70</sup>. Having given it constitutional recognition in 1994, Costa Rica, for example, now sources 99% of its electricity from renewables and uses carbon taxes to support forest restoration by Indigenous people and farmers.

# COSTA RICA NOW SOURCES 99% OF ITS ELECTRICITY FROM RENEWABLES







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