

# NATURE POSITIVE

## Travel & Tourism In Action

APRIL 2024





# Contents

- 3** Foreword
- 4** Executive Summary
- 6** Chapter 1  
The business case
- 8** Chapter 2  
Where we are now – insights from the field
- 14** Chapter 3  
A roadmap for businesses
- 40** Chapter 4  
Strengthening national tourism policies
- 50** In conclusion
- 51** Acknowledgements
- 53** References



“ Travel & Tourism has a key role to play in protecting and conserving nature. Our sector’s reliance on nature, coupled with our expertise in creating inspiring and memorable experiences, means we are ideally placed to be “Guardians of Nature””

In collaboration with  
**ANIMONDIAL**  
 Experts in Nature Positive Tourism

## Foreword

In an era marked by both global challenges and opportunities, the Travel & Tourism sector stands at a pivotal juncture, emphasising the need for transformation and meaningful partnerships to forge a path towards sustainable and impactful development. In 2022, at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity COP15, the World Tourism Organization, the World Travel & Tourism Council and the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance launched a unique and unprecedented partnership for Nature Positive Travel & Tourism. This partnership is a commitment which underlines our recognition that the conventional scope of tourism must not only evolve but needs to take a truly groundbreaking approach.

Indeed, Travel & Tourism has a key role to play in protecting and conserving nature. **Our sector’s reliance on nature, coupled with our expertise in creating inspiring and memorable experiences, means we are ideally placed to be “Guardians of Nature”.** Vast, diverse and continually growing, the sector acknowledges the urgent need for transformation. As we continue to grow, we recognise that there is a pressing need to accelerate our efforts. This transformation is not just an imperative but a responsibility that we collectively bear.

Through this first joint publication, we are not only reinforcing our efforts to support this transformation but also sharing valuable insights on initiating and sustaining these necessary changes. **Our aim is to unite the private and public sectors behind a single mission: to make Travel & Tourism Net Positive by 2030.** The Nature Positive Tourism approach not only seeks to reduce the environmental harm caused by Travel & Tourism, but also to actively inspire business, governments, and society to invest in efforts to protect nature and restore biodiversity in destinations

everywhere. It provides a perspective that can guide the tourism sector towards a more sustainable and responsible future – one that harmoniously aligns with the environmental and social needs of our time.

This report takes stock of the sector’s progress. Drawing on consultations with experts spanning government, academia, civil society, and the private sector, it makes clear that the sector has the potential, and the unique opportunity, to build back nature. We need more action. But we also need a greater understanding of the many ways Travel & Tourism depends on nature, and how to respond to those dependencies. This must underpin our efforts to identify and reduce our impacts on nature and invest in protecting and restoring biodiversity, to ensure a sustainable future for our sector and humanity.

Though we have much work to do, we are encouraged by the direction in which our sector is heading. A glance across the Travel & Tourism landscape reveals clear signs of progress. However, these changes need to be wider and deeper, but their seeds are being sown now. As detailed in Chapter 3, businesses of all kinds are boldly and creatively stepping up to meet the defining challenge of our age. We applaud these efforts and implore others to follow suit.

This, after all, is the purpose of this report. By presenting these shining examples, and by examining many of the issues common across the sector, we aim to light the path for others striving to transition to a greener way of doing business. It is only by working together and learning from each other that we can realise the dream of Nature Positive Tourism. Together, we can transform the way we do business to build a better sector and a better world. Thank you for joining us on our mission.



**Zurab Pololikashvili**, Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization  
**Julia Simpson**, President & CEO, World Travel & Tourism Council  
**Glenn Mandziuk**, CEO, Sustainable Hospitality Alliance



## Executive Summary

For campaigners and policy makers, this report is a guide to the relationship between the Travel & Tourism sector and nature, with policy suggestions and a comprehensive overview of research. For businesses, it serves as a practical guide – with advice on navigating your organisation toward a Nature Positive Tourism future. The chapters of the report are set out as follows:

**Chapter 1** delves into the background of Nature Positive Tourism, introducing some of the treaties and agreements that led to the movement's emergence. The various ways our sector depends on nature, and the effects of that dependence are also outlined.

**Chapter 2** surveys attitudes to the Nature Positive agenda among governments, businesses and consumers. It also touches on the relationship between our movement and efforts to empower indigenous communities.

**Chapter 3** is aimed at businesses. It presents findings from our cross-sector consultation of Travel & Tourism providers, and gives recommendations and advice for each stage of the Nature Positive Tourism Roadmap.<sup>1</sup>

**Chapter 4** suggests how governments can speed up the transition to a nature positive future. Additionally, it delves into the potential for Travel & Tourism to be a “Guardian of Nature”, spearheading a society-wide movement that extends beyond the sector itself.

The report also highlights case studies and helpful tips. These are aimed at the many businesses who possess both the means and the willingness, but who may lack the knowledge, to wholeheartedly embrace Nature Positive Tourism.

### A historic consultation

Many recommendations within the report flow from a cross-sector survey of experts. Undertaken between July and September 2023, this yielded several firm conclusions about the challenges and priorities of Nature Positive Tourism. These are grouped under two main themes: [awareness and action](#):

“ Navigating your organisation toward a Nature Positive Tourism future.”



### Awareness

- Communications campaigns are needed to a) highlight the role of nature and biodiversity in Travel & Tourism, and b) ensure all stakeholders, especially tourists themselves, are informed and involved in the transformative process.
- A lack of familiarity with nature risk is preventing tourism businesses from accurately measuring and tackling their environmental impact.
- Tourism businesses should a) inform and involve their staff throughout all their operations and b) consult with local communities to pinpoint actions to help people and the planet.
- The Nature Positive Tourism Partnership is vital for guiding and supporting the sector as it strives to realise Nature Positive Tourism and work towards net positive for nature.

### Action

- The tourism sector must act now to put biodiversity concerns at the forefront of business decision-making.
- The gap must be plugged between pledges to protect biodiversity and the implementation of policies and in-destination action that make a real difference.
- Businesses need to regularly assess their nature-related risks and impacts, recognising that each business and each tourism industry may have different impacts and require a customised approach.
- We need ways to identify suppliers who follow nature positive principles so that measures to protect biodiversity flow through the tourism value chain<sup>2</sup>.
- Partnerships between government, businesses and communities, combined with strengthening national tourism policies, will help Travel & Tourism halt biodiversity loss and emerge as a force for good.

This report aspires to be a catalyst not just for discussion, but for action. However, the promise of Nature Positive Tourism cannot be realised by consumers, governments or industry leaders acting alone. Only through partnership, and collective determination, can we build a more sustainable sector – one that thrives commercially while protecting nature's wonders. This ethos resonates through each of the following chapters.



# Chapter 1

## The Business Case

### 1.1 Travel & tourism and nature need each other

Travel & Tourism has a central role to play in the transition to a nature positive world. This is partly down to its size. The sector is expected to support around one in ten jobs worldwide this year. In 2024, the sector is forecast to contribute a record-breaking \$11.1TN to the global economy, and revenue from international visitors is forecast to reach \$1.89TN.<sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>Tourism is a vital source of jobs and growth on every continent, in almost every country, galvanising governments to protect their natural heritage<sup>5</sup>.

The Travel & Tourism sector is also deeply dependent on nature. More than 80% of the value of its goods and services relies on nature's resources and ecosystems<sup>6</sup>. Exploration of nature accounts for over half of all tours, with nature-based tourism growing in popularity and predicted to generate USD 665 billion annually by 2030<sup>7</sup>.

### 1.2 Understanding nature positive tourism

**Nature Positive Tourism<sup>8</sup> is tourism that not only minimises environmental harm but also actively invests in nature restoration in tourist destinations.** It includes rigorous monitoring and reporting on environmental harm, and efforts to prevent it.

At the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15)<sup>9</sup>, the Travel & Tourism sector was singled out as a potential “Guardian of Nature” for its ability to lead a wider transition to a nature positive world. Soon after, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism) and the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance (the Alliance) established the Nature Positive Tourism Partnership to help the sector halt and reverse biodiversity loss, thereby meeting its obligations under the Kunming- Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The Framework, adopted by all the governments belonging to the Convention, contains four long-term Goals and 23 Targets for 2030 which include the protection and restoration of natural areas, the integration of biodiversity into public and private activities, and provisions for businesses to regularly monitor, assess and report on their risks, dependencies, and impacts on biodiversity.

### 1.3 How does travel & tourism depend on nature?

Like many sectors, Travel & Tourism depends on nature in many ways, direct and indirect. In particular, the sector relies heavily on:

- **Ecosystems and wildlife:** Tourism demands intact ecosystems such as savannahs, forests, coral reefs, and countless other natural attractions.

- **Freshwater:** Used directly in cleaning, cooking and hospitality, and indirectly in the production of materials and products as well as for growing tourists' food.
- **Natural resources:** Travel & Tourism relies on many natural materials, ranging from the paper used in brochures to the concrete and metals vital for building hotels.
- **Energy:** Travel & Tourism uses fuel in many ways including air, road, rail and marine travel. Also, there are the fuel needs of accommodation, including heating, cooling and lighting.
- **Climate regulation:** A stable climate is critical for Travel & Tourism, both for attracting visitors and avoiding travel disruption.

### 1.4 And what is the impact of Travel & Tourism on nature?

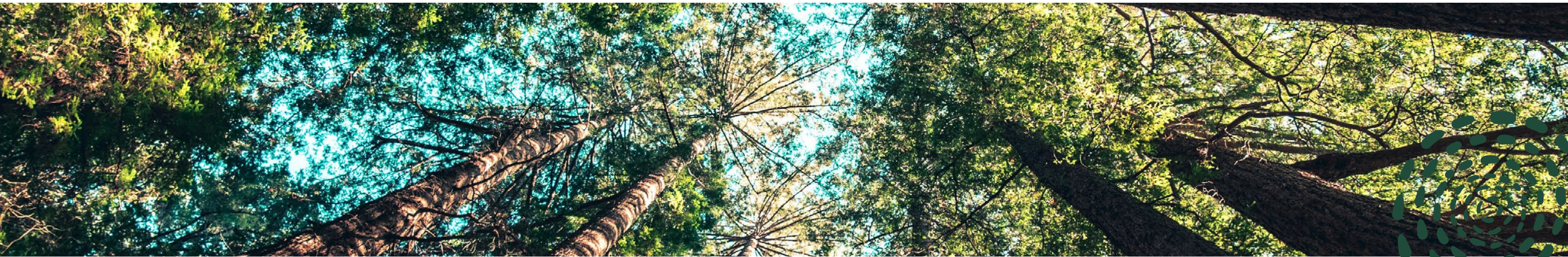
The above listed dependencies can take a heavy toll on the natural world, particularly in the following areas:

- **Land and sea use change:** Hotels, resorts and roads may disturb land and sea ecosystems, leading to habitat fragmentation and loss of species.
- **Depletion of nature:** Unregulated tourism can harm animals and plants, and degrade natural habitats. Intense hunting and fishing, either for eating, souvenirs or entertainment, can lead to species loss.

- **Intensive use of materials:** The sector has a significant material footprint, accounting for between 5% and 8% of global extraction. Its water footprint is equivalent to 5.8% of global freshwater use<sup>10</sup>.
- **Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions:** The sector is responsible for 8.1% of global GHG emissions, largely the result of transport, which accounts for 5% of total global emissions<sup>11</sup>. Energy consumption in accommodation is also a significant factor.
- **Pollution:** Tourism produces many forms of pollution, including pesticides, waste, noise and light – all of which harm natural habitats and wildlife.
- **Invasive alien species:** Introducing non-native species, intentionally or otherwise, disrupts ecosystems and causes biodiversity loss, often with substantial economic repercussions.

**The connection between Travel & Tourism and nature is hard to overstate.** Given the many ways we depend on the natural world, it is undeniable that Nature Positive Tourism is not only a moral imperative but a commercial one. When nature suffers, so does tourism. Looking ahead, mutual dependency must evolve into mutual support and care. If this is not ensured, the planet, society and tourism will suffer.





## Chapter 2 Where We Are Now – Insights From The Field

To make Nature Positive Tourism a reality we first need to understand the level of support for the nature positive agenda, and the sector’s progress towards achieving it. This chapter reports on findings from recent surveys including: an assessment of national policies on tourism (World Tourism Organization 2023<sup>12</sup>); a review of tourism business’ priorities (WTTC 2022<sup>13</sup>); (Sustainable Hospitality Alliance 2021<sup>14</sup>); (WTTC 2023<sup>15</sup>); and public surveys of consumers and local communities.

These reports shed light on how far we need to go and where to focus our efforts as we seek to advance Nature Positive Tourism. Below, we assess attitudes among governments, businesses and consumers, before reflecting briefly on the relationship between Nature Positive Tourism and indigenous communities.

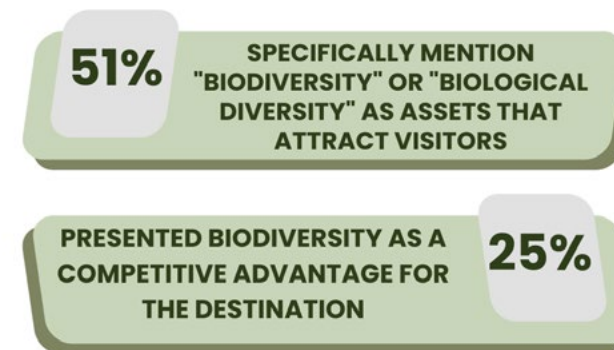
### 2.1 National governments

A global review conducted by UN Tourism 2023<sup>16</sup> analysed 80 policies and revealed that governments are increasingly sympathetic to the principles of Nature Positive Tourism. To be expected, references to biodiversity are especially common in the national tourism policies of countries that are otherwise generally committed to sustainability. Meanwhile, the importance of nature to tourism was universally acknowledged within national policies:

- Referenced sustainability as a core value in their tourism development strategies (100%);
- Specified natural capital or specific natural resources as a critical component of sustainability (88%);
- Included references to biodiversity or biological diversity at least once in their text (65%); and
- Specified nature as one of their primary tourism products (95%).



While not as widespread, the concept of ‘biodiversity’ was explicitly incorporated into policies in many cases:



Specific relationships between tourism and biodiversity were addressed by several policies. These references mostly established a positive link, with 34% considering the potential for tourism to benefit biodiversity. However, 21% did state that there are potential negative impacts from tourism on biodiversity.

### 2.2. Private sector

Many Travel & Tourism businesses, when starting to look

at their nature positive policy and planning, will be keen to understand the broader industry context. What are other companies doing? How are they doing it? What particular challenges does our sector face? These are significant questions, but it is only in the last few years that they have begun to be addressed systematically. The answers may vary a lot between industries within the sector (e.g., tour operators, travel agents, cruise, airlines, providers of accommodation and hospitality, etc.), however some general patterns do emerge as follows:

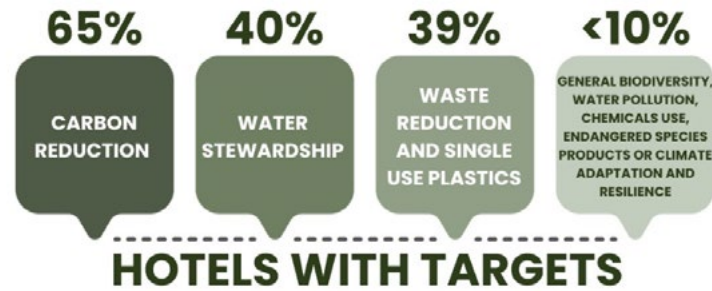
#### 2.2.1 Recognition of the issue

Successive surveys by WTTC have shown that the importance of nature to Travel & Tourism is widely acknowledged and prioritised. When asked in 2022 about challenges to implementing a nature positive agenda, lack of management priority and lack of internal policy came bottom of the list. **The following year, only 9% of those surveyed said that biodiversity was not a priority for their business, and when asked about upcoming requirements to monitor and disclose biodiversity impacts, 96% of respondents said that they would welcome these provisions.**



### 2.2.2 Current focus of business action

The environmental concerns companies are confronted with often focus on individual issues with a relatively high public profile. In the 2022 Nature Positive WTTC survey<sup>17</sup> over 70% of respondents recognised their contribution to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, waste and pollution (including single-use plastics), while fewer than 30% acknowledged that their business might contribute to overharvesting (including overfishing and unsustainable wood production) or trade in wild animal parts and products such as tortoiseshells. An in-depth, small-group study by the Alliance in 2021 found that a large portion (65%) of hotel companies had carbon targets but few had biodiversity-related ones:



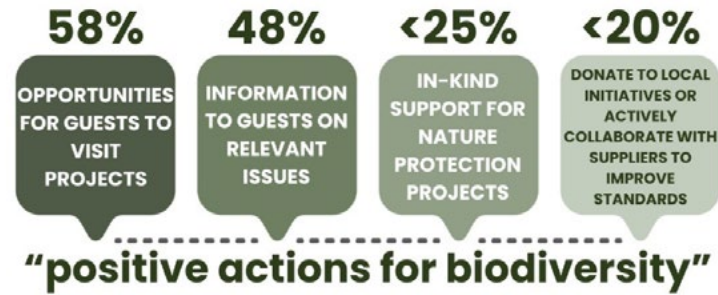
*Note: in the survey multiple answers were possible.*

### 2.2.3 Common actions

Companies are taking a variety of actions to address biodiversity issues, though customer- and communication-oriented activities appear to be significantly more popular than direct business engagement. Respondents to the WTTC survey mentioned above indicated that their main approaches to impact reduction were:

- » Initiating a stop-sell (66%);
- » Providing information to guests (58%);
- » Requesting impact reports from suppliers (<20%);
- » Following a formal procedure for handling complaints (<20%); and
- » Consulting local professionals to identify business impacts (<20%).

Asked in the same survey about how their business takes positive action for biodiversity, the following answers were collected:



*Note: in the survey multiple answers were possible.*

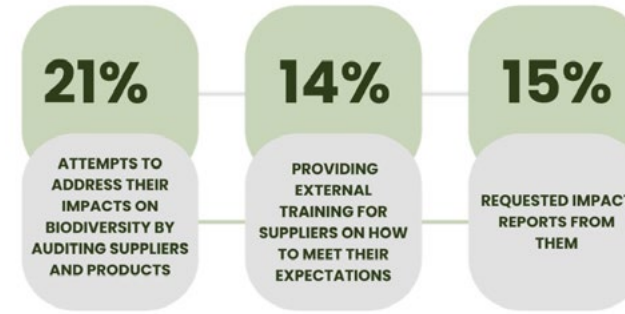
In a 2023 survey conducted by WTTC<sup>18</sup>, three primary actions for achieving nature positive goals were determined: communicating internally, communicating externally and internal planning. In contrast, reviewing products that are animal- and nature-based received the lowest popularity ranking.

While indirect actions are most popular, direct active engagement with biodiversity issues is also common. In the 2022 WTTC survey, over one third of respondents said that their company makes donations to animal and nature protection work within destinations and over one quarter said that they undertake such activities themselves. The following year, 59% of the respondents indicated that investment in biodiversity protection and restoration, including potential partnerships with NGOs, was one of their key actions to minimise harm and proactively protect and restore nature.

### 2.2.4 Engaging the tourism value chain

One of the main areas of biodiversity impact for companies throughout the Travel & Tourism sector is through the tourism value chain. The 2021 Alliance study mentioned above found that only one company had any kind of environmental commitment when it came to general procurement procedures, while 17% had commitments in specific areas - half of these being sustainable seafood. In the 2023 WTTC survey,<sup>19</sup> only 45% of respondents

identified reviewing animal- and nature-based products as one of the key actions their business was likely to take to mitigate harm and protect biodiversity – the least popular answer. The 2022 WTTC survey<sup>20</sup> revealed the following business actions:



### 2.2.5 Challenges

According to the 2022 and 2023 WTTC surveys, lack of resources is a key challenge for companies to achieve their nature positive goals. Lack of knowledge and expertise is also a substantial concern. Failure to appreciate the urgent need for action appears to only apply to a minority of businesses.

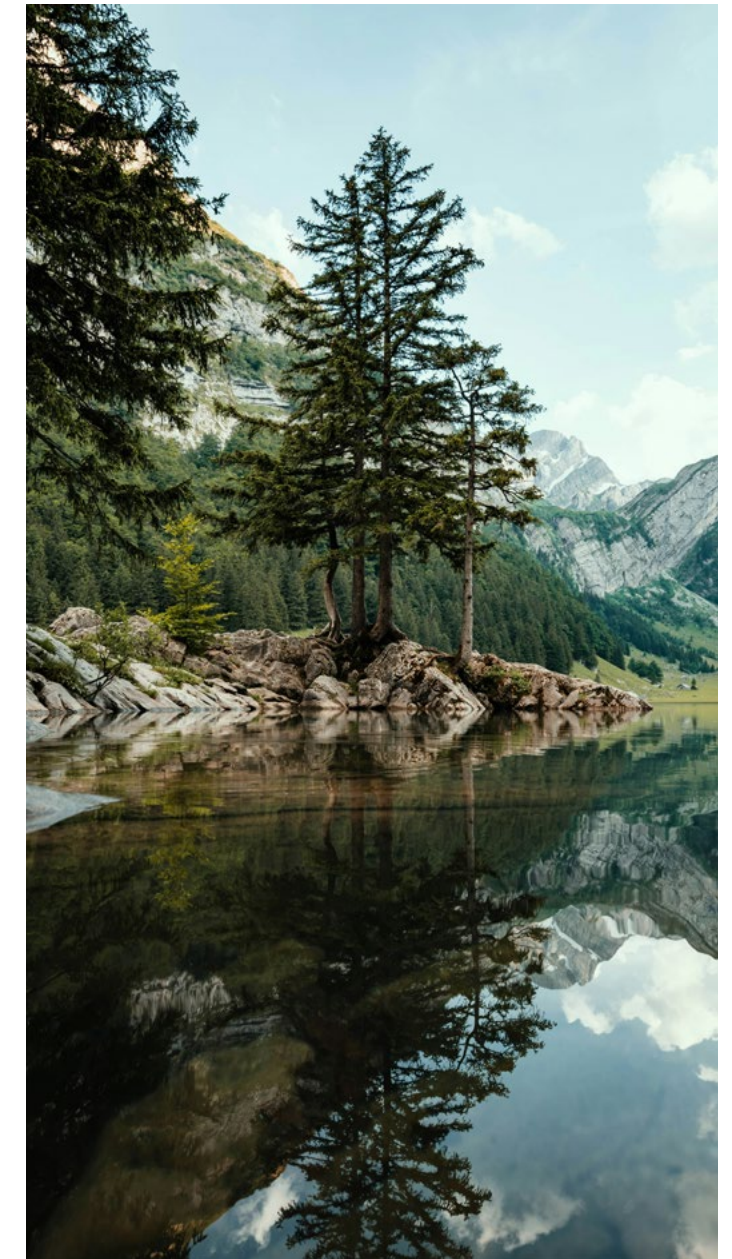


### BARRIERS TO ACTION FOR NATURE



### 2.2.6 Summary

Overall, the main message of Nature Positive Tourism is being heard throughout the sector. Action is gaining pace, particularly in some widely recognised areas. However, deeper engagement on more complex or under-publicised issues, and a more integrated response taking into account indirect impacts, have yet to become common practice. While time and money are limiting factors, motivation at senior management level is not.





## 2.3 CONSUMERS

### 2.3.1 Recognition of the issue

In 2021, the WWF commissioned a report – published by the Economist Intelligence Unit – called ‘An Eco-awakening’ (2021).<sup>21</sup> It found that **over 90% of people, across the world, are concerned about the loss of animal and plant species.**

Similarly, a Statista survey from 2022 found that **over 80% of global travellers believe sustainable tourism is important, while Booking.com (2023)<sup>22</sup> reported nearly three quarters of travellers prioritise the environment even during a ‘cost-of-living’ crisis.** This was echoed by WTTC, Deloitte and Trip.com Group in A World in Motion<sup>23</sup>, revealing that 69% of travellers actively seek sustainable travel options.<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, environmental activism is on the rise, and driving regulatory change. Following a global protest movement, over 127 countries have passed legislation to restrict single-use plastic.<sup>25</sup>

### 2.3.2 Challenges

Identifying sustainable travel options remains a challenge for consumers. A survey<sup>26</sup> found 90% of travellers seek sustainable options, but 70% reported feeling overwhelmed by the process and react by simply avoiding a destination or travel option if they felt it was not truly committed to sustainability.

The cost of sustainable travel options is also an obstacle, although customers are increasingly willing to pay more. One study by Booking.com<sup>27</sup> found that 81% of travellers intended to stay in sustainable accommodation in the upcoming year (up from 62% in 2016), and as many as 50% did not mind paying more for a sustainable holiday.

### 2.3.3 Nature conversations on the rise

**Since 2016, conversations about nature loss have increased by 65% on X (formerly Twitter) with the most dramatic increases recorded in emerging markets.**<sup>28</sup> For example, in India, the volume of nature loss and biodiversity-related posts grew by a staggering 550%, from 232,000 in 2016 to 1.5 million in 2020. In Brazil, posts grew by 442%. In fact, within the same period, Brazil produced the largest number

of signatures for biodiversity and nature campaigns of any country in the world.<sup>29</sup>



Conversations also grew in developed countries: for instance, in the United Kingdom, posts about nature loss and biodiversity grew 206%, while 92% of survey respondents stated that the loss of animal and plant species is a serious or somewhat serious global problem.<sup>30</sup>

### 2.3.4 Summary

The demand for sustainable and responsible Travel & Tourism has been on the rise consistently since 2016. This has been driven by increasing consciousness in consumers and the sheer availability of global communications platforms that encourage sustainable travel solutions. Tourism businesses should therefore demonstrate to consumers their sustainability agenda and actions taken to build back nature, and not just talk about it.

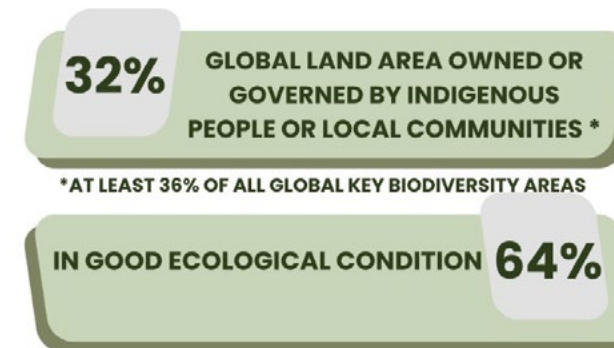
## 2.4 Communities and indigenous peoples

The engagement and involvement of local communities is fundamental to Nature Positive Tourism, including in employment and contracting, products and experiences, goods and services, and more. The full extent of these interdependencies is wide-ranging and complex, and largely falls outside the scope of this report. However, some important issues concerning the relationship between indigenous communities and the sector have been overlooked and are worth highlighting here:

“ The demand for sustainable and responsible Travel & Tourism has been on the rise consistently since 2016. ”

## 2.4.1 Indigenous people and nature

In 2021 a consortium of international conservation organisations (including UNEP-WCMC, IUCN and several multinational NGOs) found<sup>31</sup> that at least 32% of global land is owned or governed by indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs). This includes at least 36% of all global Key Biodiversity Areas. An estimated 64% of these lands were in good ecological condition, with a further 27% in moderate condition and only 9% likely to be in poor condition. While some IPLC lands overlap with conventional protected areas, more than half of them do not. A 2021 study of indigenous lands across the tropics, published in the journal Nature Sustainability, found that indigenous lands provided similar levels of protection against deforestation as conventionally protected areas.<sup>32</sup>



## 2.4.2 Indigenous people and tourism

Tourism enterprises run by indigenous people are well established in some places. In Canada, for instance, around 1,900 indigenous tourism businesses generated an estimated USD 1.9 billion in 2020. However, if developed without their active participation, there are also instances where tourism can exploit and harm these communities. By supporting community-based tourism initiatives that defend and protect their natural resources including the safeguarding of their land and cultures, businesses not only support these communities directly but can also help tourism and the planet. A range of resources on this topic is available from UN Tourism.<sup>33, 34, 35, 36</sup>







## Chapter 3 A Roadmap For Businesses

Despite alarming biodiversity loss, a consensus persists among signatories of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other experts that it is not too late to halt the destruction of animal and plant species. However, it can be done only if there is a transformative, widespread change across all sectors. This chapter gives a snapshot of what this might look like for businesses in Travel & Tourism. For businesses just starting on their Nature Positive Tourism journey, the Biodiversity Basics sections below highlight simple ways to begin engaging with these issues.

Many of the below recommendations are based on **insights yielded from the Nature Positive Tourism Partnership's cross-sector consultation undertaken in 2023**. A [report](#) on the consultation is available online, and the findings have informed the guidance below.

In parallel to the consultation, the Partnership also gathered **case studies** from a range of sources to provide examples of good practice and innovative approaches. A broad selection of these is presented below (and in Chapter 4) to stimulate and support efforts to put Nature Positive Tourism principles into practice.

This chapter follows the structure of the Nature Positive Tourism<sup>37</sup> Roadmap, presented in the 2022 WTTC report Nature Positive Travel & Tourism. This framework is designed to support businesses in understanding and applying the

Nature Positive Tourism approach and to ensure they comply with their obligations under the Global Biodiversity Framework. It helps organisations unite environmental sustainability issues – including plastics & pollution, water use, illegal trade in wildlife, carbon emissions and positive impacts – under a single overarching plan. A full explanation of the Roadmap and the individual phases and steps within it is provided in the 2022 report.

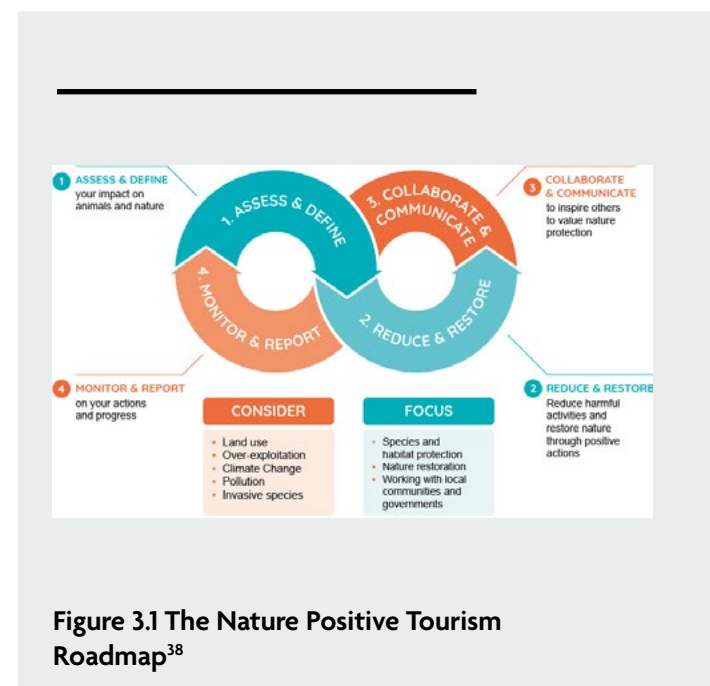


Figure 3.1 The Nature Positive Tourism Roadmap<sup>38</sup>

### 3.1 PHASE 1: ASSESS & DEFINE

The consultation conducted for this report found that many businesses are struggling to prioritise Nature Positive Tourism actions because the business case and wider implications are not fully understood. Instead, businesses typically focus on individual, high-profile topics, such as single-use plastics or carbon emissions, without recognising their wider role in biodiversity loss. Where nature or biodiversity is recognised, it is frequently a single, often low-priority, issue within a series of sustainability measures.

In fact, biodiversity fundamentally underlies all sustainability principles, as illustrated by the Stockholm Resilience Institute's analysis of the dependencies between the Sustainable Development Goals. Their 'Wedding Cake' diagram shows that meeting the biodiversity-related goals (SDGs 6, 13, 14 & 15) is a precondition for meeting all others.

#### 3.1.1 Phase 1, Step 1: Scope The Nature Positive Tourism approach

Businesses should start the process by cataloguing their direct and indirect operations and the ways in which they may rely on or impact nature. Further information and guidance on scoping priorities and how they apply to different business types can be found in [Nature Positive Travel & Tourism \(WTTC\)](#), [Pathway to Net Positive Hospitality \(the Alliance\)](#).

and Practical [Guide for the Development of Biodiversity-based Tourism Products \(UN Tourism\)](#).

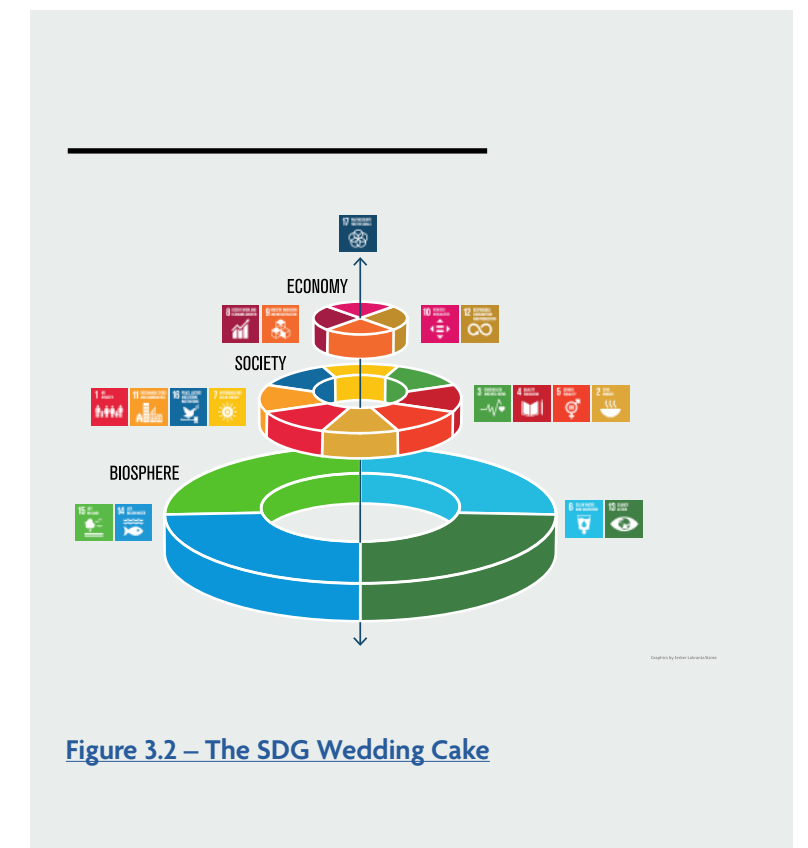


Figure 3.2 – The SDG Wedding Cake



**Biodiversity Basics:** As a minimum, businesses should identify the factors that are vital to their operation, service, sustainability and reputation. Such information will help to prioritise actions that mitigate risks. If the scope is initially kept relatively narrow, e.g. only focusing on direct operations or key destinations, it can be expanded in the future through a periodic review process.

Both industry and non-industry respondents to the consultation agreed biodiversity safeguards are rarely integrated through the supply chain, with many non-industry consultees reporting that biodiversity commitments by Travel & Tourism rarely translate into action on the ground. This issue is especially relevant to businesses reliant on extensive value and supply chains. Travel agents, for example, typically have a small destination presence but can significantly influence activities that happen there.

### Case study:

Value chain good practice - Responsible consumption of seafood (Canary Islands, Spain)



#### Phase 1 | Step 1

As part of Iberostar's pioneering move towards a circular economy, the company aims to ensure that by 2025 100% of the seafood consumed in its hotels will come from certified or responsible fisheries<sup>39</sup>. To achieve this, it is collaborating with the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) in order to identify the main problems faced by local fisheries in the Canary Islands. One of the outcomes of this analysis has been the need to properly manage local fisheries based on accurate data coming from empirical work, rather than general guidance based on data from similar species in other destinations. In collaboration with the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Iberostar plans to analyse the growth rates and age at maturity of seven commercial species fished in Canary Islands waters. The outcomes will be shared with regional authorities with competences in fisheries management and will allow Iberostar to source only fish of an appropriate size, thereby maintaining lasting fish stocks for the future. Iberostar also supports local communities to better manage their fisheries.

Building an understanding of a destination's environment and biodiversity can give businesses the opportunity to identify and benchmark impacts to be monitored and addressed. Various relevant tools exist to support this, but businesses may first need to expand their in-house skills, or work with an external partner. A full list of biodiversity assessment tools can be found on page 8 of the [Toolbox of Nature Positive Travel & Tourism Resources](#) and in the Pathway to Net Positive Hospitality.

“ Building an understanding of a destination's environment and biodiversity can give businesses the opportunity to identify and benchmark impacts to be monitored and addressed.”

### Case study:

Biodiversity benchmarking - using eDNA sampling (North Atlantic Ocean)



#### Phase 1 | Step 1

MSC Cruises, the MSC Foundation and NatureMetrics (eDNA survey experts) have joined together in a project named “eBioAtlas: Biodiversity Sampling from Cruise Liners using eDNA”. The primary goal is to collect comprehensive biodiversity data on marine species using eDNA sampling. By collecting the genetic material left by organisms in seawater and sending it to NatureMetrics for analysis, the team will discover and record the marine wildlife present across MSC Cruises' itineraries. The project has global reach, with the data contributing to the centralised, publicly available platform eBioAtlas, to help drive informed decision making for the benefit of both people and nature. The programme began acquiring biodiversity data from three different MSC Cruise ships operating in the North Atlantic in June 2023.

#### 3.1.2 Phase 1, Step 2: Assess dependency and impacts on nature

Once the scoping is complete, the business can start to assess its operational dependencies (which also constitute business risks) and impacts on nature. Implementation guidance can be found in the Nature Positive Travel & Tourism report and the Toolbox of Nature Positive Travel & Tourism Resources and the Pathway to Net Positive Hospitality.

**Biodiversity Basics:** As a minimum, businesses should consider their contributions to each of the five drivers of biodiversity loss (changing use of sea and land, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasive non-native species)<sup>40</sup> and map these against their itemised direct and indirect operations. Consider these in context of what mitigation actions the business already applies and what additional actions are needed.

The consultation identified measuring risk and impact as the biggest challenge for the adoption of Nature Positive Tourism, especially among industry-affiliated respondents, over 90% of whom listed it as a key challenge. A clear and thorough assessment of dependencies and impacts is a vital step to enable meaningful and effective measurement.

“ Despite alarming biodiversity loss, a consensus persists among signatories of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other experts that it is not too late to halt the destruction of animal and plant species. ”



## Case study:

Assessing impact on nature – a quantitative approach to managing business-risk



### Phase 1 | Step 2

When DISCOVA was reviewing its animal welfare policy, its leaders were disappointed. They wanted a way to comprehensively assess their wildlife practices, but found that few existing tools and memberships were designed to have a sustained impact. When they were subsequently approached by ANIMONDIAL with an opportunity to help develop a new business evaluation tool – NATOUR IMPACT – they decided that it closely fitted their business needs. Becoming a Founder Member gave them the chance to shape the framework and ensure that it was an effective tool for improvement, not just a one-off assessment. The company's internal Responsible Travel Working Group finds the tool comprehensive as it links animal welfare, biodiversity, sustainable consumption and community engagement. As the evaluation asks not just for answers but to provide evidence, it ensures that the process is transparent and will lead a meaningful output. It includes

concrete recommendations, steps for improvement and ways to mitigate impacts. concrete recommendations, steps for improvement and ways to mitigate impacts.

The consultation overwhelmingly identified functioning, healthy ecosystems and biodiversity as tourism's greatest asset, acknowledging that the sector must urgently act to protect and restore nature in order to reduce the risk of losing the essential services and resources it provides. Individual businesses need to assess their own risks and impacts, rather than adopting a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, to identify the most efficient and effective mitigation strategy in each case.

## Case study:

Defining dependencies on nature (Aruba, Netherlands)



### Phase 1 | Step 2

Undeveloped green space in Aruba is scarce. For tourist spots, in particular, greenfield sites are in high demand for

new hotels and other construction. But land use is also the greatest driver of biodiversity loss on the island. With this in mind, Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort, the Caribbean's first certified carbon neutral hotel, took action. In October 2022, in honour of its 35th anniversary, the resort revealed it was forever protecting – and currently reforesting – a 12-hectare tract of land nestled in the heart of Noord, one of the island's busiest cities. Managed by The Bucuti and Tara Nature Preservation Foundation, the nature reserve is a classic Aruban ecosystem, hosting some 280 bird species including Wara Wara, Shocos and Prikichis. The park is being reforested with indigenous flora, trails are being added and wildlife is beginning to thrive. The reserve has attracted volunteers including Aruba's government officials, community members, resort staff, and even resort guests. As of August 2023, 273 trees have been planted, with an ultimate goal to plant at least 15,000 – saving an estimated 375 tonnes of CO2 every year.

When asked to identify the greatest impacts of tourism, most respondents to the consultation selected familiar or well-publicised issues ('pollution' and 'climate emissions') rather than less well known but highly impactful issues. This was particularly apparent in reference to 'overharvesting' which was not recognised by any industry respondent, despite being named by over a quarter of non-industry respondents. 'Invasive species' was not selected by any of the participants, despite a recent report identifying invasive species playing a key role in 60% of global plant and animal extinctions<sup>41</sup> and evidence demonstrating a clear link with tourism activity<sup>42</sup>. However, the consultation did highlight tourism's contribution to pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss, which collectively have been identified by the UN Environment Programme as the Triple Planetary Crisis<sup>1</sup>, requiring "ambitious and coordinated action"<sup>43</sup>. Nonetheless, findings indicate that greater efforts are required to ensure the sector is aware of the importance of nature and how operations directly and indirectly degrade it.

<sup>1</sup> The 'triple planetary crisis' refers to the environmental threats caused by human activity "propelling climate change, destroying nature, and raising pollution levels", as presented by the Executive Director of UNEP in July 2020 (The triple planetary crisis: Forging a new relationship between people and the earth).

## Case study:

Addressing impacts on nature (Malaysia)



### Phase 1 | Step 2

Local threats from tourism activities in Malaysia include overcrowding (especially on coral reefs), boat strikes and abandoned fishing gear – particularly lost fishing nets known as 'ghost nets'. Fuze Ecoteer is a conservation tourism project helping to protect the coral reefs and turtle populations of the Perhentian Islands Marine Park, Malaysia, through a portfolio of activities. In one project, local stakeholders can inform the company if they find any ghost nets, and a 'rapid response' conservation unit of 20 local villagers and volunteers is then deployed to collect them. Turtles hit by boats are also reported and – where possible – treated and returned to the sea. Fuze Ecoteer also undertakes coral restoration and seagrass monitoring, and has planted over 500 coral nubbins with an 80% survival rate.



**3.1.3 Phase 1, Step 3: Define and implement a nature positive approach**

After conducting the scoping and assessment steps, businesses can use this knowledge to define their commitment to halting and reversing biodiversity loss. Implementation of a Nature Positive Tourism approach throughout the business will help to bring biodiversity protection into strategic decisions across all operations and through the supply chain. It will also provide a focus point for employees to communicate the goals and progress of the project internally.

**Biodiversity Basics:** *As a minimum, the business should create and publish a commitment to protect animals and nature. The business does not need to do everything at once, but instead focus on the easy wins – such as assessing animal-based activities against the industry’s best practice. Businesses should also plan and budget for longer-term change – such as converting to renewable energy sources, reducing the spread of invasive species, or monitoring biodiversity through eDNA sampling to contribute to global biodiversity knowledge.*<sup>44</sup>

“ Building an understanding of a destination’s environment and biodiversity can give businesses the opportunity to identify and benchmark impacts to be monitored and addressed.”

**Case study:**

**Mainstreaming biodiversity – an integrated commitment**



**Phase 1 | Step 3**

Keen to ensure all of its destination activities are positive for nature, and not only reduce negative impacts on natural ecosystems but also proactively support the regeneration of nature, Exodus established “Nature First”. The plan features structured targets following the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ [see phase 2, step 1] such as eliminating directly provided single-use plastics (avoid), halving the carbon footprint of offices and trips (reduce) and rewilding 100 square metres of land per passenger (regenerate). Through a partnership with eBioAtlas they also give travellers the opportunity to contribute eDNA<sup>2</sup> samples to its centralised public database. The plan includes mechanisms for monitoring progress through supplier surveys, internal logs and project-specific monitoring, as well as goals to engage suppliers (especially accommodation) and tour guides. The plan and targets are publicly presented in the Exodus Impact Report 2022.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ‘eDNA’ refers to traces of DNA that living things leave behind in the environment.

One of the most urgent actions and pressing challenges for Travel & Tourism is the integration of biodiversity safeguards through the supply chain, where many negative impacts may occur. Auditing and support services are a plausible solution. Suppliers are already assessed against health & safety, hygiene, sustainability and animal welfare requirements, with some auditing companies offering remedial support to ensure compliance. Nature positive criteria incorporated into these existing services would enable businesses to commission third-party auditing services to assess their suppliers for ‘biodiversity risks’, and allow the option of combining this with other risk areas to comprehensively filter trusted suppliers.

**Case study:**

**Integrated auditing solutions – protecting animals and nature in the supply chain**



**Phase 1 | Step 3**

Identifying trusted suppliers that conform to appropriate standards in animal and nature protection is a challenge for tour operators and suppliers alike. The Preverisk Group, which provides auditing services to help tourism businesses

maintain high standards throughout their operations, is creating a an integrated approach that not only identifies, but mitigates risks to animals and nature in their supply chains. Combining its existing auditing services that include health and safety, sustainability, and animal welfare, the company is expanding this remit to include an assessment of the spread of invasive species, biodiversity loss and degradation of natural habitats and a range of support services for suppliers.

**3.2. PHASE 2: REDUCE & RESTORE**

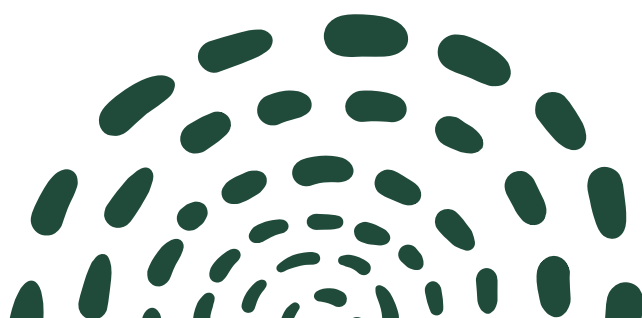
After the Assess & Define phase, businesses should identify the actions required to reduce harm to nature and the opportunities for restoration, and bring these together into a complete strategy. The overall objective of this phase is to ensure the business gives back to the destination more than it takes. The focus should be on activities that make the biggest difference in the areas identified as responsible for the highest negative impact.

**3.2.1 Phase 2, Step 1: Prioritise impacts**

After Phase 1, the next step is to match an appropriate response to each identified area of impact. A business that has opted for an online Nature Positive Tourism evaluation, such as NATOUR IMPACT (see case study in Phase 1 Step 2), will have received a tailored plan of prioritised remedial recommendations and aligned actions. A business undertaking the assessment internally will need to apply the Mitigation Hierarchy<sup>3</sup> to define and prioritise its responses.<sup>46</sup>

**Biodiversity Basics:** *When assessing your impact, consider each of the five drivers of biodiversity loss. You can then identify appropriate mitigation actions for each impact, following the Mitigation Hierarchy. Ensure that the greatest impacts are addressed, even if the action is complex or time-consuming, rather than focusing on less significant impacts that may be easier to mitigate.*

<sup>3</sup> A mitigation hierarchy consists of an ordered list of approaches used to aid decision making, with the first being the preferred approach for any situation, and those further down the list only adopted if the preferred approaches are impossible or impractical. The Nature Positive Tourism Mitigation Hierarchy consists of: Avoid, Reduce, Restore, Regenerate. More details are provided in the Nature Positive Travel & Tourism report.





## Case study:

Applying Mitigation Hierarchy – to define priority actions to minimise impacts (Maldives)



### Phase 2 | Step 1

IHG Hotels and Resorts (IHG) is seeking to determine the nature-related risk of all its hotels and ensure they have a positive impact on their environment. At the InterContinental Maldives Maamunagau Resort, protecting and preserving the local lagoon and surrounding ocean is a top priority. Through collaboration with the Manta Trust, the hotel follows a specific action plan to protect its beautiful surroundings for the community, which includes several innovative energy- and waste-saving measures at different levels of the Mitigation Hierarchy. Compost is produced from organic waste to avoid the risk of spices and food colouring entering the ocean and potentially damaging marine life. Solar panels produce 8% of the resort's energy to reduce carbon emissions by 365 tonnes a year. A water ultrafiltration system can purify up to 155,000 litres a day for use in the hotel, avoiding

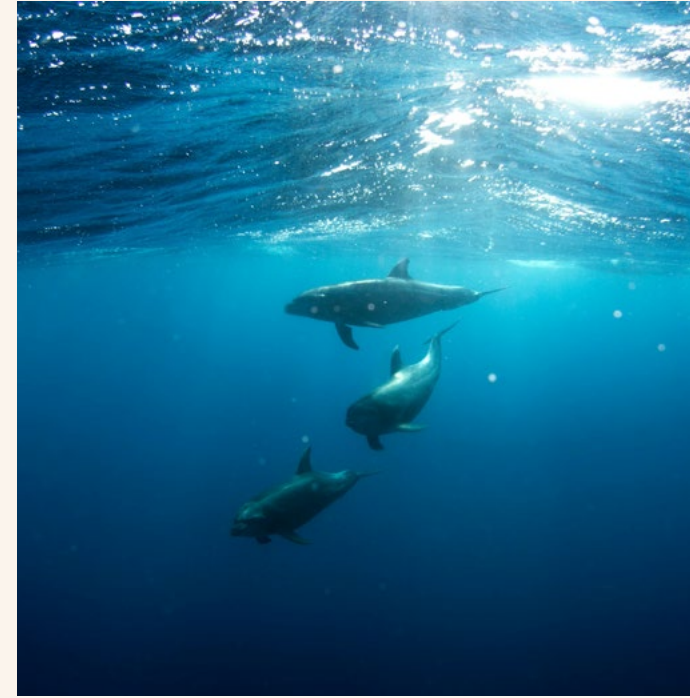
(or dramatically reducing) the demand on other clean water sources. An onsite machine crushes glass so it can be used alongside aggregate when mixing concrete for building works, reducing both glass waste and demand for construction materials. The hotel's work with the Manta Trust also supports conservation efforts by the Maldivian Manta Ray Project, allowing researchers based at the resort to learn more about the species so it can be better protected.

Businesses will not always be able to avoid or minimise identified negative impacts through their own actions alone. Working with other businesses, or as part of a cross-sector partnership, improves chances of success. Accessing local knowledge is likely to be a key element of this. Businesses are encouraged to improve the effectiveness of their action by seeking out local cross-sector partnerships near destinations.



## Case study:

Ecotourism – supporting local conservation efforts (United Kingdom)



### Phase 2 | Step 1

Dolphin populations along the Sussex coast in the United Kingdom are poorly studied and little is known about their numbers or habitats, meaning they have very little protection in the local area. The Sussex Dolphin Project (SDP – a project of the World Cetacean Alliance) aims to protect the cetaceans of Sussex through research, education and awareness programmes within the local community. This includes ecotourism trips with local boat tour operators and wildlife guides who offer insights on coastline protection. The charter companies involved work with SDP to reduce their environmental harm, including by following the SDP Marine Mammal Interaction Guidelines when dolphins or porpoises are sighted.

*if the preferred approaches are impossible or impractical. The Nature Positive Tourism Mitigation Hierarchy consists of: Avoid, Reduce, Restore, Regenerate. More details are provided in the Nature Positive Travel & Tourism report.*

“A comprehensive plan will not only identify ways to reduce your negative impact on nature, but feature opportunities to proactively protect and restore the natural world too.”

### 3.2.2 Phase 2, Step 2: Opportunities to restore nature and regenerate destinations

A comprehensive plan will not only identify ways to reduce your negative impact on nature, but feature opportunities to proactively protect and restore the natural world too. As above, these efforts should be guided by where you can have the greatest impact in any given destination. This step is not just for businesses offering nature-based activities: cultural and leisure activities will have impacts that need to be compensated for and opportunities to enhance nature exist in urban environments as well as rural locations.

**Biodiversity Basics:** *Businesses should focus on their key destinations (e.g. where they send most clients, or where they have the greatest influence) to identify opportunities to protect and restore nature. It may not be possible to act on all opportunities immediately, but a considered inventory of options will be invaluable for identifying which opportunities are most viable and efficient, and potentially for extending the portfolio in future.*

Some businesses are already undertaking nature positive actions, especially 'ecotourism' companies offering opportunities for guests to visit nature conservation projects, learn about biodiversity issues in the destination and take part in data collection, site management or animal care. Embracing this role can create a strong brand for the business and provide a clear message to align the product offer with impact mitigation and nature restoration activities.



## Case study:

**Financing solutions – helping to combat illegal wildlife trade (Cambodia)**



### Phase 2 | Step 2

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. Cardamom Tented Camp uses in south-western Cambodia uses ecotourism to combat illegal wildlife trading and to fund conservation in the 180km<sup>2</sup> Botum Sakor National Park. Founded in 2017, it is a partnership between the Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation (a wildlife foundation of The Minor Group), YAANA Ventures (the camp operator), the Wildlife Alliance (a Cambodia-based NGO), and the Royal Government of Cambodia. To the north of the camp, land is being cleared for commercial use, while to the south, mono-culture rubber is being developed. Before the camp was established in 2017, common practices included

deforestation for timber, wildlife hunting for bushmeat and trophies, land encroachment and riverbank dredging for sand. The Wildlife Alliance purchased the land to protect it, however the Cambodian Government included a condition that economic activity had to take place. The partners therefore created Cardamom Tented Camp as a conservation lodge. Profits from the camp are used to support patrols by 16 forest rangers, who patrol the park to arrest poachers, remove snares, nets and traps, and ensure the camp's perimeters are secure. Since it was founded, the number of snares, nets and traps has fallen by about 80% and illegal activity has been restricted to occasional incursions at the perimeter of the forest reserve. Wildlife is returning: rangers have reported the presence of sambar, fishing cat, leopard, slow loris, dhole, civet and peacock, among others, while Asian elephants, clouded leopards and silvered langurs – all threatened species – have been seen from camp boats.

However, it is not only 'ecotourism' companies that invest in biodiversity. An increasing number of businesses across the sector also support or contribute to nature conservation or restoration programmes, from protecting biodiversity-rich habitats and turtle nesting sites to reforestation, rewilding and the regeneration of coral reefs.



## Case study:

**Providing financial and in-kind support – to restore nature and regenerate destinations (Australia)**



### Phase 2 | Step 2

Achieving Nature Positive Tourism goes beyond mitigation. Ensure activities have an overall net benefit, and this means also identifying positive contributions such as opportunities to restore nature. The Intrepid Foundation – the non-profit arm of Intrepid Travel – supports a portfolio of biodiversity protection and restoration projects in Australia through domestic partners. The Blue Carbon Lab, for example, uses cutting-edge blue carbon research to mitigate climate change to support the restoration and protection of three crucial blue carbon ecosystems across Victoria. These projects - at Swan Bay, Truganina Wetland, and Avalon - involve working with local communities, citizen scientists and volunteers. At Avalon, the foundation supports restoration efforts by the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC) to protect cultural heritage sites. Meanwhile, Greening Australia tackles Australia's complex environmental challenges through large-scale, on-the-ground restoration.

The project rebuilds resilient ecosystems across Australia, from the warm waters of the Great Barrier Reef to the cool island of Tasmania. It restores landscapes with innovative and science-based solutions that support native wildlife, increase biodiversity, improve water quality and sequester carbon. Through these local experts and communities, Intrepid is playing its part in restoring nature in one of its key destinations.

Establishing and nurturing public-private-community partnerships is essential for Travel & Tourism to support and enhance national and international efforts to protect nature and restore biodiversity. The consultation of experts welcomed the opportunity within this document to share knowledge and examples of best practice, demonstrating the power of partnerships combined with local knowledge and expertise to overcome challenges, combine resources, bring benefits and sometimes even 'achieve the impossible'. A list of opportunities for building partnerships can be found on page 20 of the [Nature Positive Travel & Tourism Toolbox](#).



**“ Establishing and nurturing public-private-community partnerships is essential for Travel & Tourism to support and enhance national and international efforts to protect nature and restore biodiversity.”**



### Case study:

#### Whale (and Wildlife) Heritage Areas – working with destinations to build back biodiversity



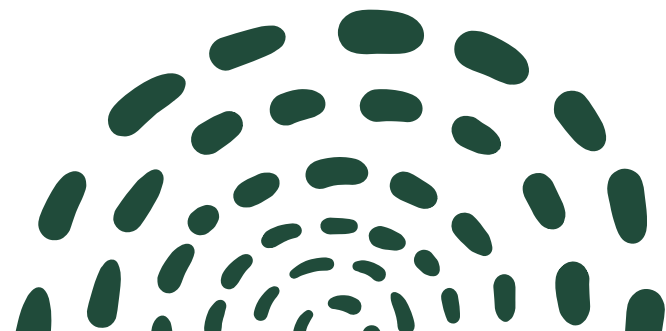
#### Phase 2 | Step 2

Businesses should seek nature-related opportunities in their destination, whereby the private sector works in partnership with destination authorities, NGOs and community-based groups or projects to better protect biodiversity and restore nature. For instance, the Whale Heritage Area (WHA) programme is an initiative created by the World Cetacean Alliance (and currently run in partnership with World Animal Protection) to formally recognise and accredit destinations around the world that support and demonstrate the importance of cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) and their ocean habitats. These sites empower and defend the right of local communities to care for and protect these animals through a collaborative management partnership. For the tourism industry, a Whale Heritage Area provides a clear marker to help identify and support sustainable practices and create a platform for communities to engage with

marine culture, heritage and biodiversity. WHAs are cross-sector partnerships that can include non-profit entities and NGOs, local communities, destination management organisations, governments (local and national), the private sector (for example whale watching companies), academic research institutions, conservation organisations and museums and artists/creatives, among others. Each WHA is run by a steering committee made up of local stakeholders. There are currently eight certified sites around the world and many others working toward certification. Part of the assessment process is to ensure that the sites meet strict welfare, conservation and sustainability criteria. As such, each Whale Heritage Area will include measures to both mitigate harm and build back biodiversity in its management plan. The model has now been extended to create the Wildlife Heritage Areas initiative, including locations ranging from South American forests to European mountain regions.

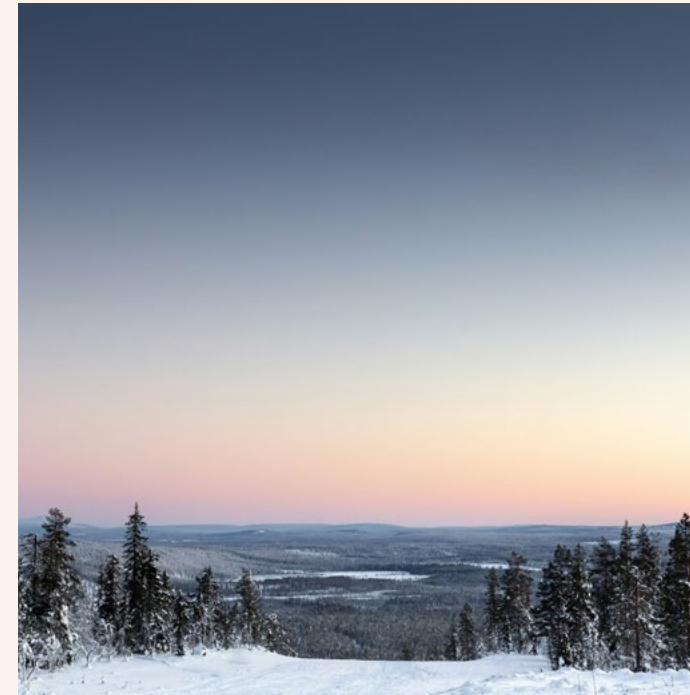
Involving travellers directly in restoration activities can be a way to maximise impact with limited internal capacity. It can also help to connect visitors to the destination and even provide them with a satisfying and memorable experience.

“ Businesses can 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. ”



### Case study:

#### Preventing Invasive Species – helping to halt biodiversity loss (Finland)

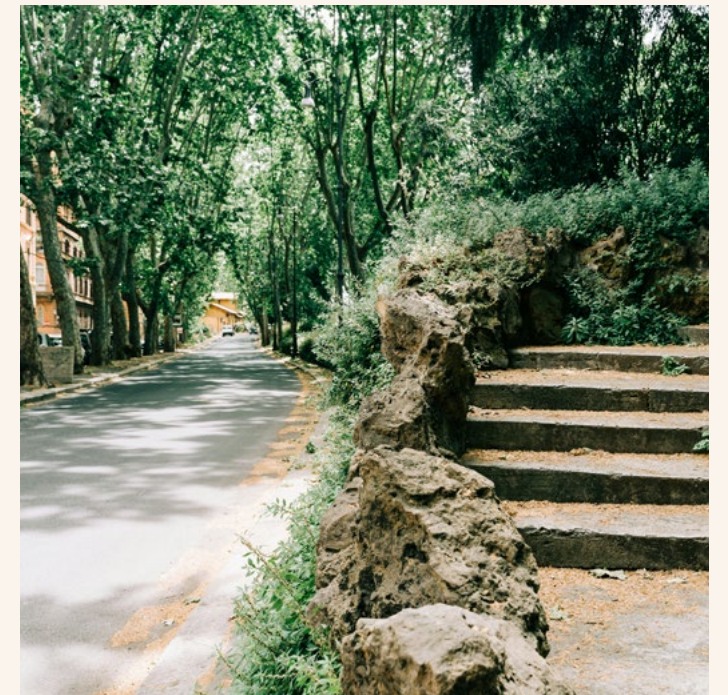


The severe global threat posed by invasive alien species is underappreciated, underestimated, and often unacknowledged, according to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) - seriously threatening nature, nature’s contributions to people and good quality of life<sup>48</sup>. Hawkhill Cottage Resort offers accommodation and activities in the countryside next to the Nuukio National Park in Finland. One of the main threats to local biodiversity there is the invasive species *Lupinus polyphyllus* – the garden lupin. Hawkhill helps to control the spread of this non-native plant by offering excursions for visitors to learn about the local habitat and remove some of the plants by hand. They even provide information for guests on how to do this themselves as they explore the area and provide equipment including trowels and buckets. In addition, neighboring sheep are also helping reduce the spread of alien species, as they pasture on meadows where garden lupins grow.

Businesses can 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.

### Case study:

#### Urban greening in action - restore biodiversity (Italy)



#### Phase 2 | Step 2

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.<sup>47</sup> The Intrepid Foundation has been investing in the natural regeneration of urban areas in Italy through its support for the Community Collaboration ‘Cooperativa Coraggio’. Green spaces surrounding major cities around the world are rapidly declining as urban areas expand and build more



infrastructure. Rather than being considered a pivotal part of the cityscape, public lands and green space surrounding Rome are often neglected and overgrown, or become a focus for illegal activities. Cooperativa Coraggio addresses the various social and environmental needs of communities around Rome by regenerating these unused public lands with organic, sustainable agriculture. The spaces that have been regenerated allow people to spend more time outdoors, take part in environmental workshops and attend cultural events that champion sustainability, while educating local communities about the importance of short food chains, sustainable agriculture and food waste issues. Cooperativa Coraggio has not only built a source of organic food and green space but has also created more than 40 jobs for the local community since the project began.

### 3.2.3 Phase 2, Step 3: Create A Nature Positive Tourism Strategy

In this Step the efforts of scoping, assessment, prioritisation and planning come together to create the overarching, comprehensive and action-driven strategy of the business to deliver its Nature Positive Tourism commitment. This should include all existing (and anticipated) sustainability and carbon reduction measures, which are united by their focus on nature. The strategy should define how the business will integrate and deliver the commitment by covering all its functions including management, product and purchasing, marketing and communication, customer services, and destination operations. This should be a combination of short-term prioritised actions and internal capacity-building, as well as medium- to long-term actions and budget commitments.

**Biodiversity Basics:** *As a minimum, tourism businesses should focus on addressing high-impact areas. This should include the involvement of the product and contracting department, to identify the high-risk attractions/ experiences within the existing product portfolio, and engaging with accommodation and attractions/ experiences suppliers to review their sustainability activities.*

A full strategy will include:

1. Actions in the short-term to address the highest impact areas and quickest solutions
2. Short- to medium-term procedures, such as building partnerships and establishing new activities
3. And in the long-term, sustaining the business commitment and building on the short-term wins.

Planning for the long term, while also setting short-term goals, can produce future benefits that exceed

### Case study:

**Build nature positive partnerships - a commitment to preserve and regenerate coral reefs (Maldives)**



#### Phase 2 | Step 3

Working together, in partnership, is a resource-efficient and effective way to support the delivery and achievement

of collective objectives. In 2001, the Four Seasons Resort in the Maldives partnered with a local marine consultancy, Reefscapers, to protect and regrow the local coral reef. Today, the partnership is one of the world's largest artificial reef restoration projects. The partnership uses an innovative technique of tying coral fragments onto 'coral frames' made by a local co-operative of eight employees. For more than two decades, guests have been invited to plant their own reef and watch it grow at MarineSavers.com. Thanks in part to the donations of Four Seasons guest sponsors, more than 8,500 transplanted reef structures now subsist in the waters around the two Maldivian Resort islands of Kuda Huraa and Landaa Giraavaru. In 2022, the project's first-of-its-kind artificial intelligence (AI) research was recognised in a science journal,<sup>49</sup> with the aim of inspiring scientists in numerous fields to take on similar cross-disciplinary challenges. The process has even become self-sustaining, with propagated frames now undergoing natural reproduction. To date the team has settled five species more than eight times and hopes to create a simple methodology that can be used across the country to repopulate areas of damaged reef, increase diversity, and help colonies adapt to changing environmental conditions.

Citizen science projects actively involve members of the public in scientific endeavours that generate new knowledge or understanding. They are also a great way to inform and engage travellers in nature conservation, and may involve other industry members such as tour guides. This can make them an efficient way to achieve several strategic objectives at once.

**“ Planning for the long term, while also setting short-term goals, can produce future benefits that exceed expectations.”**

### Case study:

**Involving customers in conservation - traveller participation in citizen science**



#### Phase 2 | Step 3

Exodus has partnered with NatureMetrics so that travellers on some of their trips can take freshwater samples for eDNA analysis as part of their adventure. Understanding how to address ecosystem exploitation first requires knowledge about what species live in an area. All living things leave traces of their DNA in the environment, from skin cells, hair and blood among other sources, which can be easily collected from water bodies (e.g. streams and lakes). NatureMetrics, a science-tech company, has developed a simple-to-use technology that enables a more comprehensive and efficient method of collecting eDNA, which can be used to map global species distribution. Together with the International Union for Conservation (IUCN) they are building a global repository of species DNA called eBioAtlas and helping to inform the IUCN's 'red list' of endangered species as well as many other conservation initiatives. By contributing to this, the data



collected by Exodus clients helps to support conservation action and to inform world biodiversity policy. Exodus currently has 17 allocated 'Citizen Science Departures' in destinations across the world, and an estimated 1,000 customers took part in collecting samples in 2023. All customers who take part in one of these trips receive a lab report once the data have been analysed to see what species were identified from their sampling session.

### 3.3. PHASE 3: MONITOR & REPORT

Once a business has identified its impacts and dependencies (Phase 1) and committed to associated reduction and restoration (Phase 2), these actions need to be measured to enable the business to identify and report on the impacts (both negative and positive). This is also essential for transparent external reporting – a requirement in many territories and a key Target under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.<sup>50</sup>

Feedback from the consultation, however, suggests that businesses often lack the knowledge, expertise and resources to access information such as protected area status or conservation priorities in relevant locations, or to measure their related risks and dependencies. Many businesses also reported a struggle to prioritise Nature Positive Tourism actions as these are not internally promoted or fully understood. This internal disconnect also leads to a disconnect with local destinations, and to difficulties in undertaking effective monitoring.

#### 3.3.1 Phase 3, Step 1: Set SMART Objectives and KPIs

To begin, businesses will need to define and gather the baseline data against which impacts will be measured. Appropriate monitoring solutions should be identified, some of which may already be easily available or already in use. A monitoring plan will need to include: the indicators being measured; the methods being used to measure them; where measures will be taken; how often measurements will be taken; and who is responsible for taking, recording and analysing them. Guidance on creating a monitoring plan and setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound) KPIs can be found on page 45 of the [WTTTC report](#).<sup>51</sup>

**Biodiversity Basics:** *Accountability is impossible without monitoring. This starts with ensuring that planned activities are actually implemented. Then, as implementation progresses, monitoring should shift to the impact of those actions. When gathering the desired data is not feasible, proxy metrics should be used to allow some level of evaluation – no actions should be taken without some form of monitoring.*

Measurement-taking activities can often be integrated with reduction, protection and restoration activities, and in most cases should be built into project planning. Sometimes monitoring activities can be carried out by the same individuals as other activities, and may even be achieved by the same actions (e.g. snare removal in national parks also provides data on the number of snares being set in the area).

### Case study:

**Gathering biodiversity data - monitoring biodiversity in the destination**



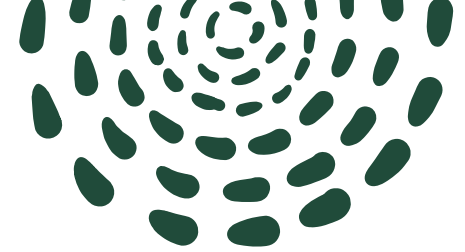
### Phase 3 | Step 1

*Posidonia oceanica* is a species of seagrass that grows only in the Mediterranean Sea, underpinning several natural habitats and providing many local and regional ecosystem services. The seagrass is normally found in water temperatures of 15°C - 25°C, however the Mediterranean is warming very fast with temperatures above 30°C in summer in some areas. Iberostar – together with the Mediterranean Institute for Advanced Studies (IMEDEA) – is working to identify seagrass meadows that have a genetic tolerance to high temperatures and could be used to restore other meadows suffering from increased temperatures. Cameras will also be installed at the Iberostar Alcudia Park hotel to measure the evolution of the state of the beach in the face of the effects derived from climate change, using video images alongside information from installed sensors and tide gauge records.

#### 3.3.2 Phase 3, Step 2: Integrate throughout the Business and Supply Chain

The stakeholders' consultation highlighted that tourism businesses find it a challenge to prioritise their nature positive tourism actions (Phase 2) and to ensure their effective implementation through direct and indirect operations. This may be because business professionals lack an understanding of the procedures for mainstreaming and monitoring/disclosing nature impacts, are unfamiliar with creating plans to deliver nature positive actions, or have difficulties in identifying opportunities in destinations and connecting with suitable partners and suppliers. The consultation outcomes confirm that integration within the business and throughout the supply chain is an area that needs to be tackled through strategic planning in order to optimise impact and efficiency.<sup>52 53</sup>

**Biodiversity Basics:** *Gathering data for monitoring needs to be the responsibility of the team that is conducting the relevant action. For example, a sustainable seafood policy needs to be monitored by the hospitality or contracting team, not the sustainability lead. Any teams involved in monitoring need to be informed about why they are being asked to do this and how it fits into the*

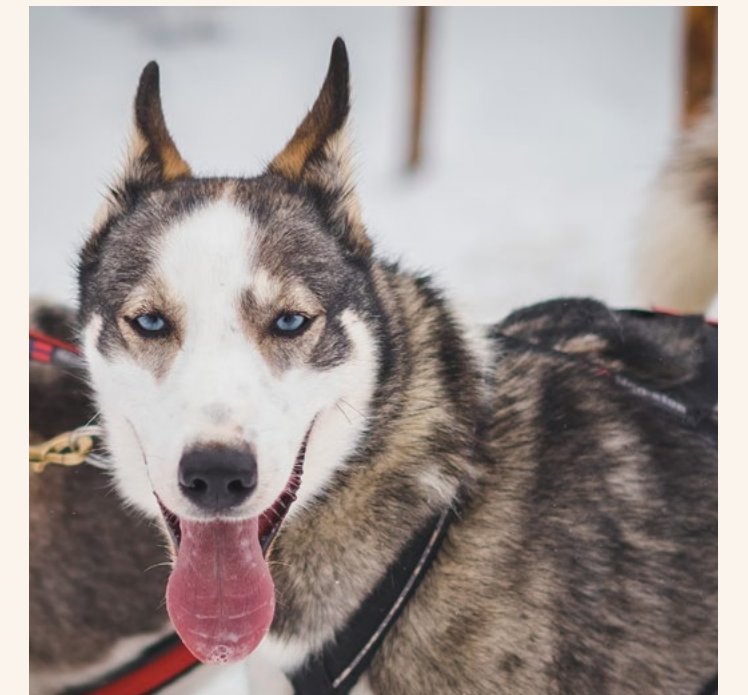


*wider Nature Positive strategy. Over time, communication can be developed and enriched to include elements such as feedback opportunities and training.*

The consultation highlighted the importance of educating colleagues about the relevance of nature, and how the natural world is impacted by a company's operations. To achieve this, the integration strategy could be accompanied by a guide relevant to all colleagues and business suppliers, explaining the plan to identify, measure and disclose the organisation's impact, and the context that surrounds it.

### Case study:

**An integrated approach - safeguarding animal welfare in the supply chain**



#### Phase 3 | Step 2

After creating and reviewing its animal welfare commitment, HotelPlan UK was keen to ensure its integration through the business and alignment with the wider HotelPlan Group. The steps to support this goal included a full day's training workshop to inform key staff



from across the group including product procurement, supply chain, and communications. In addition, the company conducted an external desk-based review of animal experiences, with those highlighted as high risk taken forward for in-person auditing. The team joined a consultancy for an in-person audit, which doubled up as internal training.

Integrating nature positive action throughout the organisation does not have to be restricted to formal channels. Providing more relaxed opportunities to learn about key environmental issues and how the business is responding to them can be a valuable way to inform and motivate individuals who are not part of the core sustainability team, and to bring employees together in the shared endeavour of transitioning to a Nature Positive Tourism approach.

### Case study:

#### High-level support for a Nature Positive agenda - inspiring colleagues to act for nature



### Phase 3 | Step 2

To prepare the foundations for British Airways Holidays' Nature Positive Tourism approach, their Sustainability team has created and delivered a series of Lunch & Learn opportunities for all colleagues. Topics include climate change, biodiversity, and responsible sourcing, aimed at making sustainability more accessible. The British Airways Holidays Sustainability team considers this a vital component to ensure that colleagues can take ownership of the company's Nature Positive delivery plan.

#### 3.3.3 Phase 3, Step 3: Effective Reporting

A nature positive strategy should be reported on regularly – at least annually – and consistently, providing information that can be readily compared with past reports. It should be comprehensive and include successes – which can be celebrated – and failures, which should be acknowledged with remedial actions proposed. The Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) has developed a 'LEAP' approach which aims to help organisations conduct the due diligence necessary to inform disclosure statements aligned with the TNFD recommendations, regardless of their formal disclosure requirements.<sup>54</sup>

**Biodiversity Basics** Any data that has been collected internally to track progress should be made available externally in some form. Basic context also needs to be provided, explaining why and how that information was collected. The original Nature Positive Tourism strategy should provide a general structure for presenting this. As successive reports are produced, and monitoring processes are refined or expanded, additional detail and interpretation can be provided.

Reports can take any format, provided they include the relevant information and track progress. This can provide an opportunity to publicly celebrate the commitment the business has made to protecting and restoring nature and be combined with updates on other corporate responsibility actions.

### Case study:

#### Transparent reporting – disclosing risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity



### Phase 3 | Step 3

Target 15 of the Global Biodiversity Framework requires businesses to transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity. The UK adventure travel operator, Explore Worldwide, has published a 'Purpose Paper' that reports on the company's achievements and ambitions to protect People, Planet and Places. The report is underpinned by their own Ethical Marketing guidelines and explains its progress to decarbonise and decision to discontinue some of its products, as part of the company's commitment to the Glasgow Declaration. It also reports on actions at HQ to reduce environmental impacts, celebrates the formation of the Explore Foundation and looks ahead to 2024 and the development of the company's biodiversity roadmap. In 2023, Explore was named the Sustainable Travel Company of the Year at the Travel Industry Awards and in 2024 it became B Corp Certified.

### 3.4 PHASE 4 - COLLABORATE & COMMUNICATE

The consultation highlighted a lack of awareness and understanding as a significant obstacle to realising Nature Positive Tourism. Strong collaboration is needed within and between sectors, but also better communication of the urgency of the cause and the required response.

#### 3.4.1 Phase 4, Step 1: Partnerships of shared purpose

Working with tourism peers, travel associations, suppliers, NGOs and academia can be an efficient and effective way to support our shared goal: the realisation of Nature Positive Tourism.<sup>55</sup>

**Biodiversity Basics:** Most companies are likely to have access to potential partners through existing networks, so considering how existing connections or collaborations can be developed and expanded is a good place to start. The process of developing a Nature Positive Strategy may also reveal areas that cannot be addressed by the business in isolation; these can be seen as 'partnership gaps', and collaborators can be sought out to fill them. Over time, existing partnerships are likely to suggest further partnership opportunities, which can extend to form wider strategic alliances.

The consultation process confirmed that multi-sector and community partnerships are a key opportunity area for Nature Positive Tourism. Partnerships with local experts within communities are often a highly efficient way to conduct reliable monitoring. The importance of positively engaging indigenous leaders and community-based NGOs in helping collect the data was also highlighted.

**“ A nature positive strategy should be reported on regularly – at least annually – and consistently, providing information that can be readily compared with past reports.”**



## Case study:

### Collaborative food supplier training - to reduce food waste (Dominican Republic)



#### Phase 4 | Step 1

The Dominican Republic is considered a biodiversity hotspot, with a high level of biodiversity and endemic species not found anywhere else in the world. This biodiversity not only fulfils important ecosystem functions, but is also a critical tourism asset, and an economic lifeline for many people. However, increasing tourism developments in recent years have come with considerable negative impacts for the local population and for biodiversity. To address this, a joint venture called 'Futoris' was founded by the TUI Care Foundation and the German non-profit environmental organisation, KATE. The partnership aims to increase the offer of local, sustainable and biodiversity-friendly food in Las Galeras. Since the project began, 60 people have been trained in sustainable food practices, and ten local restaurants have received in-depth support to develop biodiversity-friendly menus. In addition, a recipe book on 'Using Food Waste' has been

developed as part of the sustainable gastronomy manual and contains helpful tips and recipes for biodiversity-friendly dishes. Overall, the training has resulted in a better understanding of how foodservice operations can help promote biodiversity.

The consultation suggested that Travel & Tourism should be taking proactive steps to work with government, civil society and local communities in destinations, recognising that the more these efforts engage and involve local people and local knowledge, the greater the likelihood of success.

## Case study:

### Collective action to reduce impacts - combining tourism capacity with local expertise, knowledge and ambition (Greece)



#### Phase 4 | Step 1

The Rhodes Co-Lab was established by the TUI Group, the TUI Care Foundation and municipal leaders in the South Aegean Region. With support of the Greek

prime minister, the lab is a creative collaboration that brings together a variety of stakeholders to co-create solutions that are fundamentally re-shaping and re-designing tourism. The idea is to make Rhodes a beacon for sustainable transformation, from whose experiences and implementation strategies other destinations will benefit. The Rhodes Co-Lab is managed by a team of sustainability experts who work closely with each of the project partners to catalyse sustainable growth for Rhodes while conserving resources and promoting the participation of local people, for example through new job opportunities. The protection of biodiversity and the environment is critical. A first meeting with representatives of various tourism companies and representatives of the leading Greek tourism associations took place before the public presentation of the initiative, and first initiatives have been launched. The lab's mission is to become the first global example of a holistic transformation of a destination, covering the entire value chain of tourism, aiming for the long-term prosperity of its people, its natural environment and its local economy, based on the principles of sustainability.

#### 3.4.2 Phase 4, Step 2: Know Your Audiences

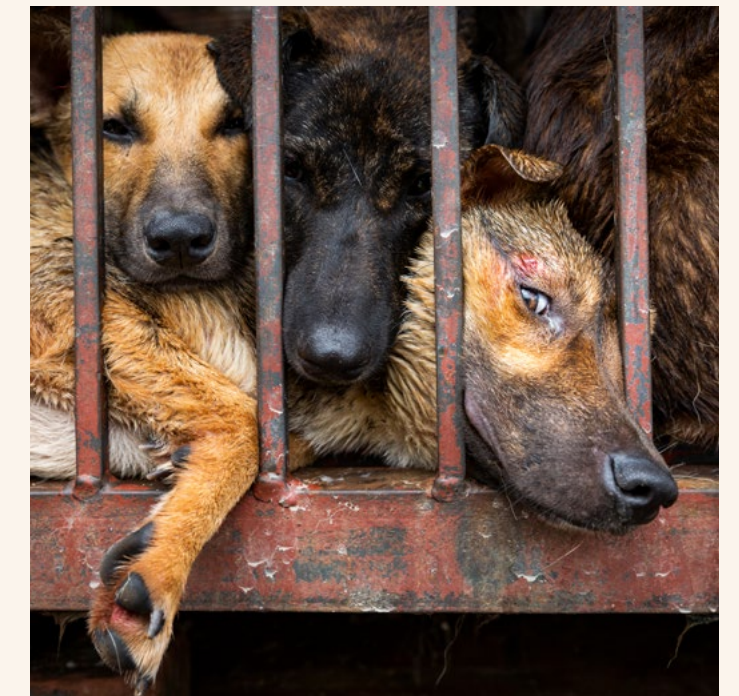
Accurate and engaging communication 'is essential to the success of a for a Nature Positive business model<sup>56</sup> and must consider both internal audiences and external ones such as media, the public, customers, partners and suppliers. All communications should be aligned and complimentary, with consistent terminology and messaging.<sup>57</sup>

**Biodiversity Basics:** *Any business can create a simple communications plan, even if this contains little more than a press release. Putting this within the planning framework is a good way to ensure that it has been given some consideration and handled in the most appropriate way. It is a good way of highlighting what further communications would be desirable when capacity allows, providing a pathway for expanding communication efforts over time.*

With the steady increase in reporting requirements, the immediacy of social media, and public demand for greater transparency, communicating a business biodiversity commitment is no longer just a marketing opportunity but a governance necessity. Businesses are also encouraged to lead by example by sharing achievements, challenges and failures. **Over time, shared, multiplied and amplified messages can drive policy change.**

## Case study:

### Influencing change in destination - acting on mutual interests with NGO partners (South East Asia)



#### Phase 4 | Step 2

Through collaboration with the tourism sector, FOUR PAWS aims to end the dog and cat meat trade, a practice that approximately 90% of Vietnamese and Cambodian citizens want to stop. DISCOVA, with its key focus on tourism to the region, is leading the way alongside other influential travel businesses. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, more and more people are aware of the public health risks associated with live animal trades. FOUR



PAWS believes that trading dogs and cats for their meat significantly escalates the risk of rabies transmission, consequently putting tourists at risk. So far, through working together, hundreds of dogs and cats have been rescued and rehomed, slaughterhouse workers have been given access to new livelihoods, and Hoi An has declared itself dog and cat meat free. DISCOVA has been a vocal advocate for the campaign at local embassy events - publicly showcasing their support - and the organisation is now working alongside FOUR PAWS to help identify new methods of influencing a regional ban.

The consultation highlighted the importance of educating colleagues about the relevance of nature and how business operations are both dependent on it and able to protect it. Their understanding is key to ensuring the correct messages are shared and that everyone appreciates their role in delivering overall goals. This internal messaging may take the form of supplier guidance for the product procurement team, or customer-facing messages for communications and sales.



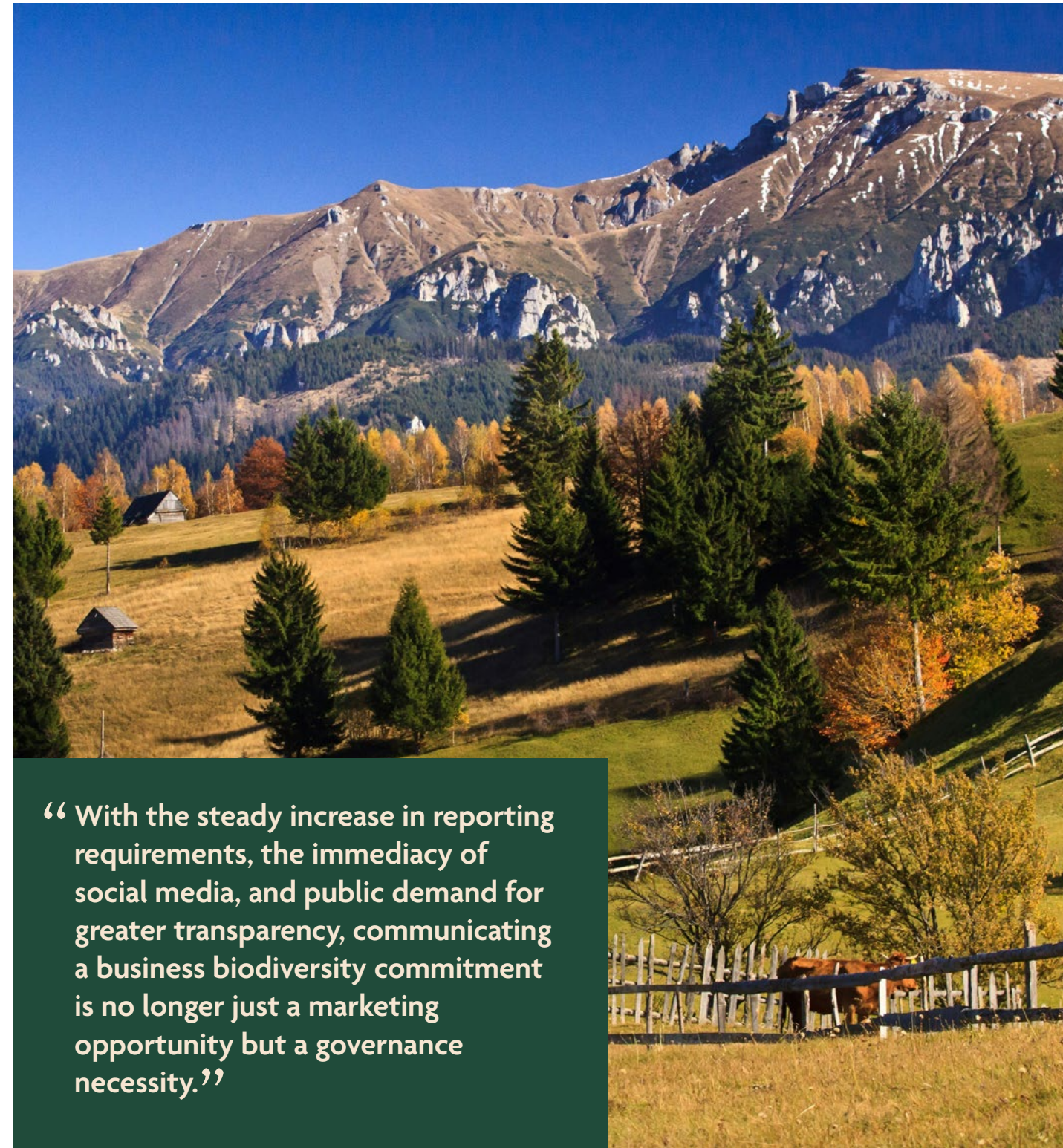
## Case study:

**Internal communication actions - ensuring consistent application across the business**



### Phase 4 | Step 2

Prior to the pandemic, the DER Touristik Group published a new commitment to animal welfare protection but faced the challenge of ensuring integration and understanding throughout all parts of the business. To support this process, they invested in the creation of key internal messaging guides covering marketing, sales and customer service, as well as product procurement alongside a Group Strategy Integration Guide. These were announced on internal channels, and stored on the group Intranet, and their integration was supported through the delivery of recorded workshops both at the group's headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany, and at the sub-brand level at the Kuoni site in the United Kingdom.



**“ With the steady increase in reporting requirements, the immediacy of social media, and public demand for greater transparency, communicating a business biodiversity commitment is no longer just a marketing opportunity but a governance necessity.”**





## Priority Actions and Recommendations for Travel & Tourism businesses

Adopting a Nature Positive Tourism approach can no longer be considered an activity for a few very committed businesses; it must become a sector-wide priority. Following the Nature Positive Tourism approach allows businesses to start small and improve steadily, making tangible progress 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<sup>4</sup> to identify nature-related risks and impacts.

**Set SMART targets and ambitious but feasible goals.** Act first where you can make the biggest difference and combine climate and nature goals.

**Halt the exploitation of animals and the degradation of nature** by working with destination partners and suppliers to improve animal welfare, diversify activities to

alleviate strain on heavily visited areas, and inspire change throughout all spheres of influence.

**Integrate biodiversity safeguards** throughout your company's direct and indirect operations. Reduce resource use and pollution; set responsible procurement policies; adopt water and energy efficiency practices; implement waste management measures; and work with local communities to manage local resources sustainably.

**Create a Nature Positive Tourism commitment** and an integrated strategy to achieve it. This should include harm mitigation targets, as well as efforts to protect and restore nature. Actions should be embedded within existing areas of activity and involve local communities from the outset.

**Take a proactive role in the regeneration of destinations.** Learn about key species, fragile habitats, actions to prevent species extinction and rewilding opportunities.

Collaborate with local communities and organisations, consult suppliers, and forge partnerships in order to be more effective.

**Involve tourists in nature conservation in the destination.** Integrate tourists and travellers in the process by creating awareness about their impact on nature and biodiversity. Introduce them to community-based conservation initiatives, or consider 'citizen science'<sup>5</sup> to actively involve them in scientific endeavours that generate new knowledge or understanding.

**Communicate your intentions, actions and impact.** Inform customers, communities, shareholders, employees, destination partners and suppliers about your business commitment. Keep them abreast of your progress. Inspire them to protect animals and nature.

**Transform tourism.** Encourage your peers to pursue more

responsible and sustainable travel practices; offer a range of sustainable travel options; curate experiences that align with nature conservation; encourage travellers to engage with local communities; and support 'citizen science' initiatives to bring tourists closer to conservation.

<sup>4</sup> The five drivers are, in descending order of impact: "changes in land and sea use; direct exploitation of organisms; climate change; pollution; and invasion of alien species". ([Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services](#); IPBES, 2019)

<sup>5</sup> Citizen science is the participation of members of the public in professionally-conducted scientific activities, most often in the collection and recording of data.





## Chapter 4 Strengthening National Tourism Policies

“ 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)<sup>58</sup>*

This chapter considers how Travel & Tourism can spearhead change by aligning its activities with the broader movement to protect and restore biodiversity. Key to this is working with governments. The UNWTO survey of national tourism policies revealed widespread

recognition of biodiversity as a crucial factor for the competitiveness of the tourism sector. The survey also acknowledges tourism's potential as a force for good in biodiversity conservation. However, few national policies explicitly reference the Convention of Biological Diversity, which supports national efforts to conserve flora and fauna. Below, we give four priority actions intended to strengthen national tourism policies and promote cooperation between the sector and governments.

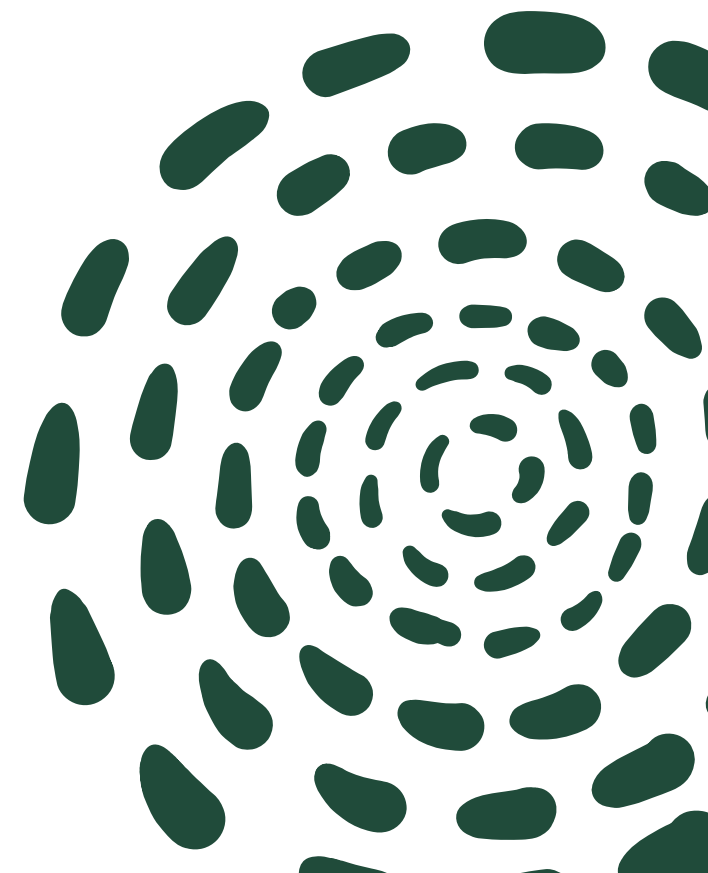
### 4.1 Priority 1: Strengthening destination policies

National governments can have a powerful influence over the Travel & Tourism industry. This comes via tourism authorities but also through regulations, planning, fiscal policy and other functions. Creating a policy environment that encourages the adoption of Nature Positive Tourism is vital if we are to transform Travel & Tourism into a “Guardian of Nature”.

### Enabling actions: Key actions for governments

Key actions for governments to consider include:

- Updating national tourism policies to reflect biodiversity's central role to the health of the Travel & Tourism sector, and to the appeal of destinations.
- Strengthening compliance by raising awareness of environmental impacts caused by tourism.
- Inviting engagement from the private sector on areas including investments, infrastructure and job creation.
- Identifying ways to reinvest tourism revenues into nature and biodiversity protection at the community level.
- Incorporating tourism into national biodiversity strategies by collaborating with national agencies, and promoting Travel & Tourism as a key part of a national movement to preserve and restore nature.





## Case study:

### National tourism industry transformation plan (New Zealand)



New Zealand has declared a commitment to rebuild a more regenerative tourism system. Its Industry Transformation Plan (ITP) for tourism is part of this goal. The ITP is a government initiative in consultation with researchers and independent advisors. The first phase of the Tourism ITP – “Better Work” – is focused on enabling decent work for the tourism industry. To make any transformational shifts in the tourism system, we must look at the foundation of the system: people. Investment in those who work in tourism is fundamental to achieve other transformational shifts. The second phase of the Tourism ITP is focused on the “Environment” and tourism.

The three pillars of focus include:

1. Integrating climate change;
2. Transforming Aotearoa New Zealand’s visitor economy to a low carbon emissions industry; and
3. Restoring biodiversity and eco-systems through tourism.

Ensuring the sector protects and restores the environment is important because Aotearoa New Zealand’s natural environment is central to the country’s attraction as a destination.<sup>59</sup>

## Case study:

### Country-wide Ministry of Tourism integration of biodiversity protection (Jordan)



The Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has completed a strategic environmental and social evaluation of their National Tourism Strategy (SEA) in recognition of the importance of environmental and social progress. The most important aspect of the environmental focus is biological diversity. Actions include:

- The launch of a social and environmental policy, which aims to direct all parties and partners to enhance green and sustainable tourism;
- Work to integrate green elements when licensing new tourism projects and developing local environmental

- classification standards, and directing tourist hotels to obtain international environmental certificates;
- The creation of environmental specifications for tourist and archaeological sites with the aim of restoring environmental systems in these areas;
- National initiatives in Jordan that contribute to: reducing greenhouse gas emissions; energy efficiency; alternative energy use and electric vehicles; a national contribution document; a national energy strategy; a national green growth plan; a framework for waste management law; and a charter of friendly tourism for biological diversity; and
- Tourism services in protected areas, where the visitor experience is enriched with unique and sustainable experiences in natural environments, with a fixed income to sustain the reserves.

#### 4.2 Priority 2: Resolving the ‘destination disconnect’

National and regional governments should enable and encourage tourism businesses at destinations to support biodiversity protection and restoration measures. Joint policies between tourism and environment protection authorities, would help to incentivise Travel & Tourism businesses to invest in local nature conservation efforts and support national biodiversity objectives. Useful interventions include information campaigns, greater accessibility to national biodiversity information and funding opportunities, as well as rewards for those who succeed in halting and reversing biodiversity loss.

#### Enabling actions: National Assistance for businesses

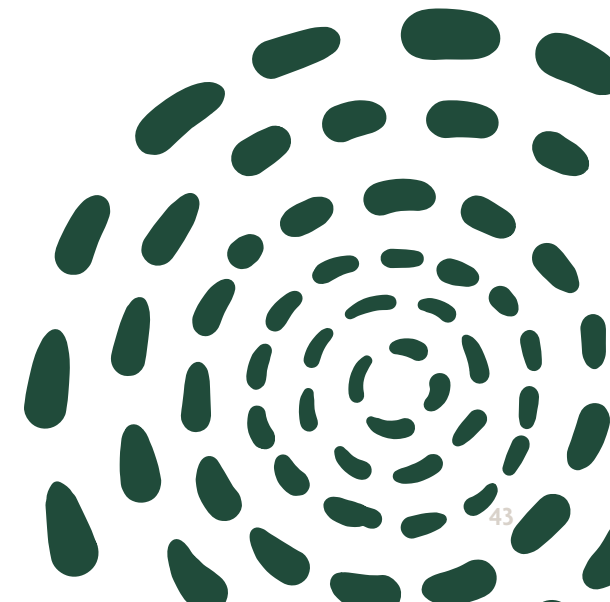
National assistance for businesses at destinations can take various forms, such as:

- Informing Travel & Tourism businesses about the natural features of their destination, for example lists of endemic and threatened species.
- Improving understanding of regulation and enforcement in the destination, including guidance on how this may affect Nature Positive action.
- Ensuring Travel & Tourism businesses can communicate with public and private bodies including subnational

- and local authorities, national park networks, national and local environmental protection agencies and NGOs, and local and indigenous community groups.
- Encouraging protected and conserved areas to work towards the IUCN Green List Standard<sup>60</sup>, to ensure strong governance and integration of the specified sustainable-development objectives.
- Incorporating national conservation and biodiversity priorities and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) references into national tourism policies and communications to improve awareness of the link between tourism and biodiversity.
- Promoting the engagement of the national tourism authority (NTA) with international initiatives to ensure at least 30% of the world’s land, ocean and waterways are conserved and managed by 2030.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> This goal is specified in Target 2 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and is shared by the Act30 initiative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Esri and also the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People intergovernmental group.

“ National and regional governments should enable and encourage tourism businesses in destinations to support biodiversity protection and restoration measures. ”





## Case study:

### Environmental guidance manuals for travel businesses (Peru)



Since 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (Mincetur) of Peru has been developing manuals of good environmental practice to support better management of tourism activities in coastal marine habitats. These manuals are aimed at tourist service providers to encourage them to carry out activities following the principles of sustainable use of natural resources, and to help them contribute to the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity. Likewise, training workshops focused on good environmental practices have been delivered, with the aim of promoting environmental protection and minimising the negative environmental impacts generated by tourist activities.

## Case study:

### Downloadable action plan for travel businesses (New Zealand)



The New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Committee has established 12 Business Commitments to support businesses in delivering the country-wide sustainable tourism agenda. These Commitments were developed in consultation with businesses and include a downloadable action plan to help each company tailor their own aligned plan. The commitments include a focus on: economic benefit, visitor experience, community support and engagement, and the environment. The Environmental focus integrates three goals: restoring nature, contributing to a net zero carbon economy, and responsible waste elimination. Commitment 10 “Restoring nature” is about contributing to protecting and enhancing Aotearoa New Zealand's environment including its water, biodiversity, landscapes and clean air.<sup>61</sup>

### 4.3 Priority 3: Creating positive partnerships

The consultation highlighted the importance of partnerships of all kinds. This includes collaborations between businesses and destinations, as well as partnerships with local communities and other sectors – particularly the voluntary sector – to achieve better conservation results.

#### Enabling actions: National support of partnerships

National tourism authorities in destinations can support nature-positive partnerships in the following ways:

- Bringing together tourism partners and Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) to address harms caused by tourism.
- Introducing tourism businesses to community groups, civil society activists and indigenous communities.
- Supporting local enforcement of regulations through stronger in-destination partnerships, including working with local experts.<sup>62</sup>
- Encouraging agencies, NGOs and community groups to engage tourism businesses on local initiatives, while empowering local communities to be guardians of wildlife.
- Recognising and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.<sup>63</sup>

“ Governments need to provide more incentives for Travel & Tourism businesses at the destination level to do the right thing. ”

## Case study:

### Ecotourism and species conservation (Sierra Leone)



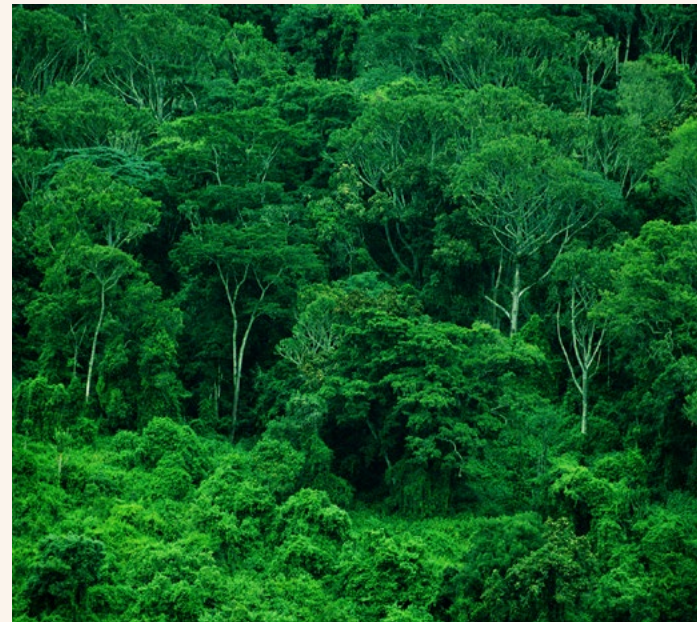
In partnership with Sierra Leone's Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary (TCS) is proposing to develop the country's first ecotourism circuit by learning from Sierra Leone's most successful ecotourism model – the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary itself. The TCS is Sierra Leone's leading destination and has garnered international accolades, appearing in several renowned publications (e.g. TIME and The New York Times)<sup>64</sup> and documentaries (e.g. BBC and Nat Geo<sup>65</sup>). The ecotourism project will focus on promoting local content, women's empowerment and community involvement while capitalizing on the value that the country's natural heritage and national animal – the chimpanzee – can bring to ecotourism in Sierra Leone. The approach will be to replicate the successful ecotourism model based at the TCS sanctuary in other parts of Sierra Leone where Tacugama is implementing community-based conservation projects. Building on these existing connections, the initiative will ensure that the communities benefit from the changes that tourism development will bring to their lives. Each of the four sites (Loma Mountains National Park, Outamba Kilimi National Park, Jaibui Island, and Sorbengi) feature



unique landscapes, rich cultural heritage, a diverse set of activities, and spectacular wildlife. By developing Sierra Leone's first ecotourism circuit, the country can present its ecological and environmental splendour to a wider international audience while creating a cohesive plan to promote its unique history, vibrant culture, unparalleled beauty and rich wildlife.

### Case study:

**Ministerial commitment to conservation-based tourism (Republic of the Congo)**

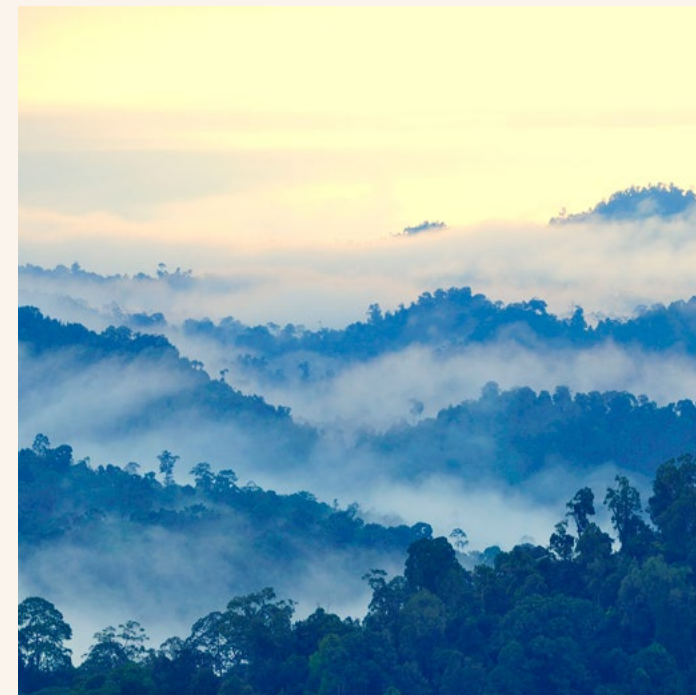


The Minister of Cultural Industry in the Republic of the Congo has declared an unwavering commitment to protect the Congo Basin. This commitment is delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF) in the Republic of Congo, the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF), the mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and the European Union (EU). This involves empowering local communities and investing in the development of sustainable tourism models to create awe-inspiring

experiences to inspire visitors. The ultimate goal is to prepare the next generation of Congolese citizens to continue their efforts to establish conservation-based tourism in the Republic of Congo and across Africa.

### Case study:

**The role of a state wildlife department in delivering eco-tourism (Malaysia)**

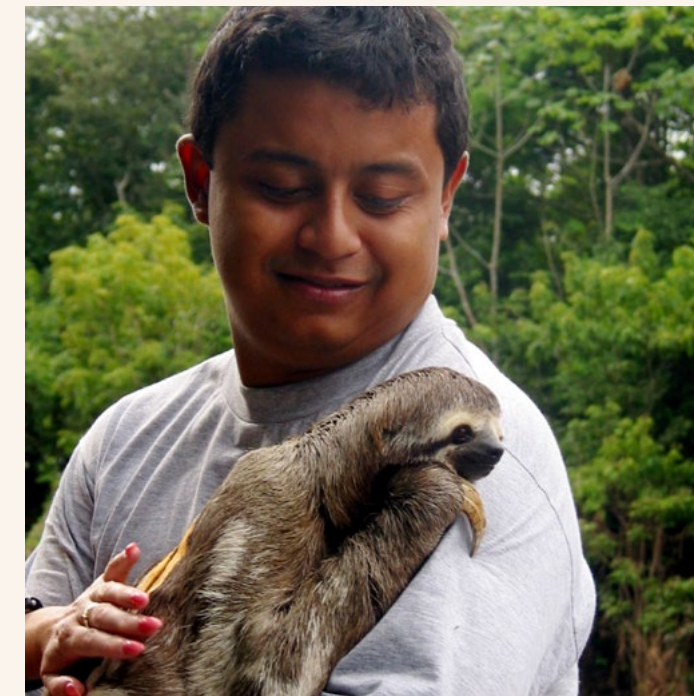


APE Malaysia is a social enterprise and adventure tourism project in the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary, under the jurisdiction of Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD). For years, the Malaysian government has worked to protect and reforest the area, including giving volunteers access to the forest and assigning tree planting plots. Today, these efforts are amplified by the work of APE Malaysia along with a small group of NGOs and research organisations leading reforestation and research activities. In APE's

Borneo Wildlife Safari experience, volunteers work alongside a local team from the indigenous orang sungai community, planting trees in the fragmented forests along the Lower Kinabatangan floodplains. They also witness how the local community plays an active role in this project, supplying saplings, boat services and food as well as sharing their local culture. To date, almost 100,000 trees have been planted on more than 17 hectares of land through APE Malaysia's work.

### Case study:

**National government and tourism campaign to protect wildlife (Costa Rica)**



Wildlife photography can be a fulfilling and sustainable way to engage with nature. But some practices are harmful, particularly if travellers are in close contact with animals. In 2017, World Animal Protection (WAP) carried out a study to identify the countries in which these inappropriate photos and selfies were most prevalent.

“Costa Rica ranked 7th, with notable spots where tourists could take pictures holding sloths and other animals. To tackle this, Costa Rica's environmental and tourist sectors - committed to the country's nature and to preserving biodiversity and protecting wildlife - joined forces to stop this practice. The project included a campaign to “Stop Animal Selfies”, asking travellers to treat wildlife with care, keep a safe distance, and watch out for signs of animals being held in captivity as photo props. The government also introduced legislation to declare that wild animals are a heritage belonging to all Costa Ricans, as part of the nation's natural treasures whose beauty attracts thousands of tourists every year. This approach has once again made Costa Rica a model for the rest of the world, particularly in its conservation and biodiversity efforts.

#### 4.4 Priority 4: Incentivise Change

Governments need to provide more incentives for Travel & Tourism businesses at the destination level to do the right thing.

##### Enabling actions: Encourage conservation

National tourism authorities in destinations can encourage conservation and discourage unsustainable activities in various ways. For instance:

- Introducing tax breaks, public sector loans and other green financing opportunities for businesses pursuing Nature Positive Tourism;
- Providing subsidies for replacing existing infrastructure with more environmentally sustainable options;
- Including environmental information in company reporting requirements and encouraging ESG reporting as a pre-requisite for public sector support;
- Subsidising local, equal-access outdoor recreation and wildlife tourism programmes;
- Encouraging private sector voluntary initiatives such as forums, trade associations and coalitions, and certification schemes.



## Case study:

### GEF Funding for local conservation of biodiversity (Mexico)



In October 2020, the Secretariat of Tourism of the Government of Mexico launched new criteria for the conservation of biodiversity in the country's tourism sector, with an emphasis on ecosystems rich in biodiversity. The project 'Kuxatur' has been financed by the Global Environmental Fund (GEF), administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and implemented by the Ministry of Tourism in coordination with local partners. It encompasses three sites:

1. Friends of Sian Ka'an in the tourist destination of Maya Ka'an, Quintana Roo;
2. Conservation of the island territory (island) in the Tourist Corridor Sierra La Laguna - La Paz and Los Cabos in Baja California Sur; and
3. The World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) in the Huatulco, Chachagua corridor in Oaxaca.

Kuxatur aims to conserve biodiversity in these coastal

ecosystems through the design and implementation of innovative policies and models of sustainable tourism. This is the first time that the tourism sector has received this type of financing from the GEF.

Importantly, efforts to deliver these priority actions and transform the tourism sector must be delivered in alignment with a just and equitable transition, including meaningful dialogue with affected groups such as businesses, DMOs, trade agencies and associations, local communities, Indigenous Peoples and marginalized communities.

## Case study:

### Local tax for use of ecosystem services (Romania)



Rasinari is a mountain village in the region of Marginimea Sibiului, in Romania. More than 50% of the region is

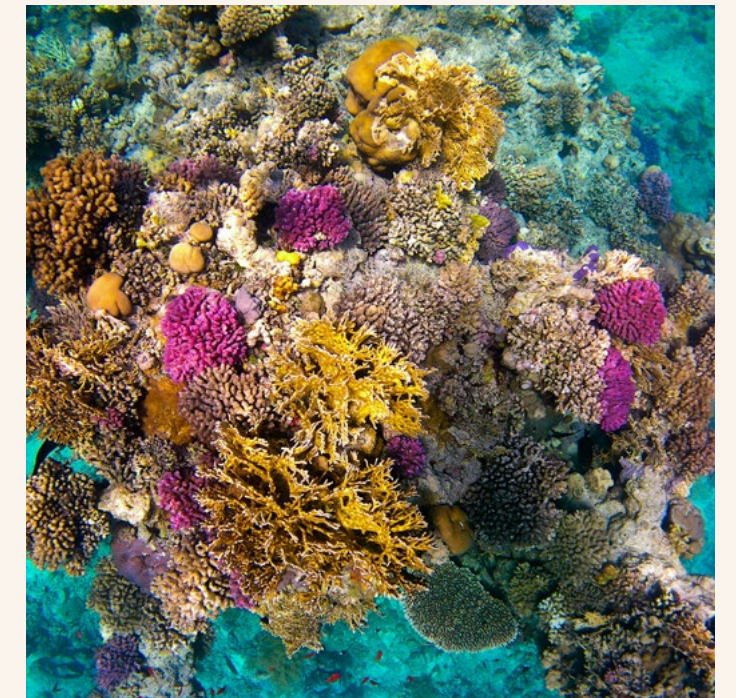
designated as a 'Natura 2000' protected area, with picturesque orchards, valleys and forests. To help protect these ecosystems, a local partnership was created to develop Marginimea Sibiului as an ecotourism destination. The partnership comprises municipalities, regional and national authorities and NGOs, and is an example of protecting wildlife and biodiversity from damage caused by local offroad sports. At the municipality level in Rasinari, a small-scale payment for ecosystem services was implemented in the form of a local tax for offroad motorcycle sports. Via a QR code, users pay roughly €1.50 per day for the use of certain routes in the vicinity of the Natura 2000 protected area. This is a good example of payment for eco-services near protected areas, and has even inspired another local village to adopt the same approach.

“ Creating a policy environment that encourages the adoption of Nature Positive Tourism is vital if we are to transform Travel & Tourism into a “Guardian of Nature”. ”



## Case study:

### Country-wide implementation and incentivisation of biodiversity protection (Egypt)



Egypt is the first country in the Middle East, and the eleventh in the world, to implement the "Green Fins" initiative which aims to protect coral reefs and marine life by applying certain standards and environmentally friendly guidelines. Scuba diving and snorkelling providers, for example, are supported with training and can be certified by independent conservation experts; in turn reassuring divers that their holiday activities are not contributing to harmful practices like chemical pollution. The Ministry of Tourism is implementing the project to incentivise and integrate biological diversity in the tourism sector in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, as well as coordinating continuously with national authorities on climate change issues. The Ministry is also working with the Al-Najma "Green Hotel" programme to distinguish hotels that seek to shift to green tourism practices. This includes supporting the spread of solar cell systems to generate electricity in hotels as an alternative to the use of traditional fuel, in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.





## In Conclusion

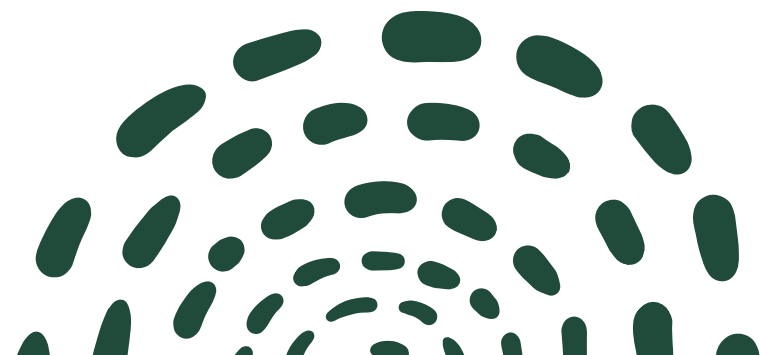
Travel & Tourism and nature are intrinsically linked. Each year swathes of humanity seek out the glorious wonders of earth, from labyrinthine coral reefs and snow-capped mountaintops to raucously alive rainforests. Tourism, so often relying on the celebration of the natural world, has much to lose from the destruction of nature and biodiversity.

Thankfully, the breadth of Travel & Tourism – and its ability to reach all ages and nationalities – means that we have the power to influence some of the most remote and biodiverse places on the planet, and gives us a special power to lead the world in a better direction. Through action and collaboration, the sector not only can be transformed but also take the global green movement to new heights.

Our world-first cross-sector consultation has proved that there is still a long way to go to make this vision a reality. Though Travel & Tourism clearly has a tremendous motivation to do the right thing, it is far from realising the dream of greener tourism. A gap remains between intention

and action, words and deeds. **Clearly, the tourism narrative still needs to shift more emphatically from enjoying and consuming nature to actively protecting and conserving it.**

However, Travel & Tourism is undoubtedly moving in the right direction. The consultation revealed throughout the sector a deep desire to preserve the wonders of our world and examples of brilliant partnerships and innovations are not hard to find. To create an even broader movement, stakeholders need to work together. Governments. Businesses. Communities. Experts. Tourists themselves. And many more groups besides. **Only a large, unified effort can turn tourism from a burden into a guardian of nature. That effort has already begun, and it is up to us to build on existing actions and quicken the pace.**



## Acknowledgements

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# ANIMONDIAL

**ANIMONDIAL** is a specialist consultancy working with travel and tourism businesses to improve animal welfare, halt biodiversity loss and ensure nature's recovery. Combining experience in developing and delivering ground-breaking initiatives, policy advances, science-based guidance and professional trainings, ANIMONDIAL is supporting the global sector to transition towards a nature-positive future.



## Special Thanks

This report would not have been possible without the following individuals and organisations who have provided valuable input and support throughout its development through peer reviews, interviews and focus groups:

Anna Pollock (Conscious Travel); Anna Spenceley (IUCN WCPA TAPAS Group); Ben Lynam (The Travel Foundation); Beth Kaplin (Center of Excellence in Biodiversity, Rwanda); Carol Ritchie (EUROPARC Federation); Carol Rose (ABTA); Cecile Fattebert (IUCN); Ché Greenidge (Barbados Environmental Conservation Trust); Daniel Kaul (NATUCATE); Dilys Roe (International Institute For Environment and Development); Ellen Walker-Matthews (TOTABC); Erika Harms (Iberostar); Francesca Mahoney (WILD Survivors); Gustavo Timo (Adventure Travel Trade Association); Hanh Nguyen (World Economic Forum); Harold Goodwin (Responsible Tourism Partnership); James Sano (WWF); Javier Aarredondo (Virtuoso); Javier Garcia (Hyatt Hotels Corporation); Ji-Boo Park (IUCN); John Sutherland (Tourism Cares); Jon Danks (African Travel & Tourism Association); Judy Kepher-Gona (Sustainable Travel & Tourism Agenda); Justin Francis (Responsible Travel); Kasia Morgan (Travelopia); Kelly Bricker (IUCN WCPA TAPAS Group); Kerri McCarton (UK Green Building Council); Laura Meyer (HotelPlan Group); Linden Coppell (MSC Cruises); Megan Morikawa (Iberostar); Megan Parkinson (Latin American Travel Association); Melissa Foley (African Travel & Tourism Association); Melvin Mek (TUI Group); Michael Meyer (Linking Conservation & Tourism); Michael Ofosuhene-Wise (Business for Nature); Mike Morris (Stantec); Myles Farnbank (Adventure Travel Guide Standard); Najam Mohamed (World Economic Forum); Neysha Soodeen (Barbados Environmental Conservation Trust); Olivia Ruggles-Brise (BCD Travel); Paula Vlamings (Tourism Cares); Paul Rogers (Planet Happiness); Pippa Howard (NatureMetrics); Prue Stone (HotelPlan Group); Randy Durband (GSTC); Sarah Marsh (YUKON); Sarah Ivory (Whitbread); Sharon Brooks (UNEP-WCMC); Shirley Ramírez Carvajal (Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía, Costa Rica); Siska Cahyati (IUCN); Satu Rouhiainen (British Airways Holidays); Susanne Etti (Intrepid Travel); Swantje Lehnert (Futouris e.V.); Swati Hingorani (IUCN); Thomas Armitt (Planeterra); Thiago Beraldo Souza (IUCN WCPA

TAPAS Group); Ulrika Aberg (IUCN); Yu-Fai Leung (IUCN WCPA TAPAS Group); Zoe Greindl (Business for Nature).

With additional thanks to the following for the provision of best practice case studies:

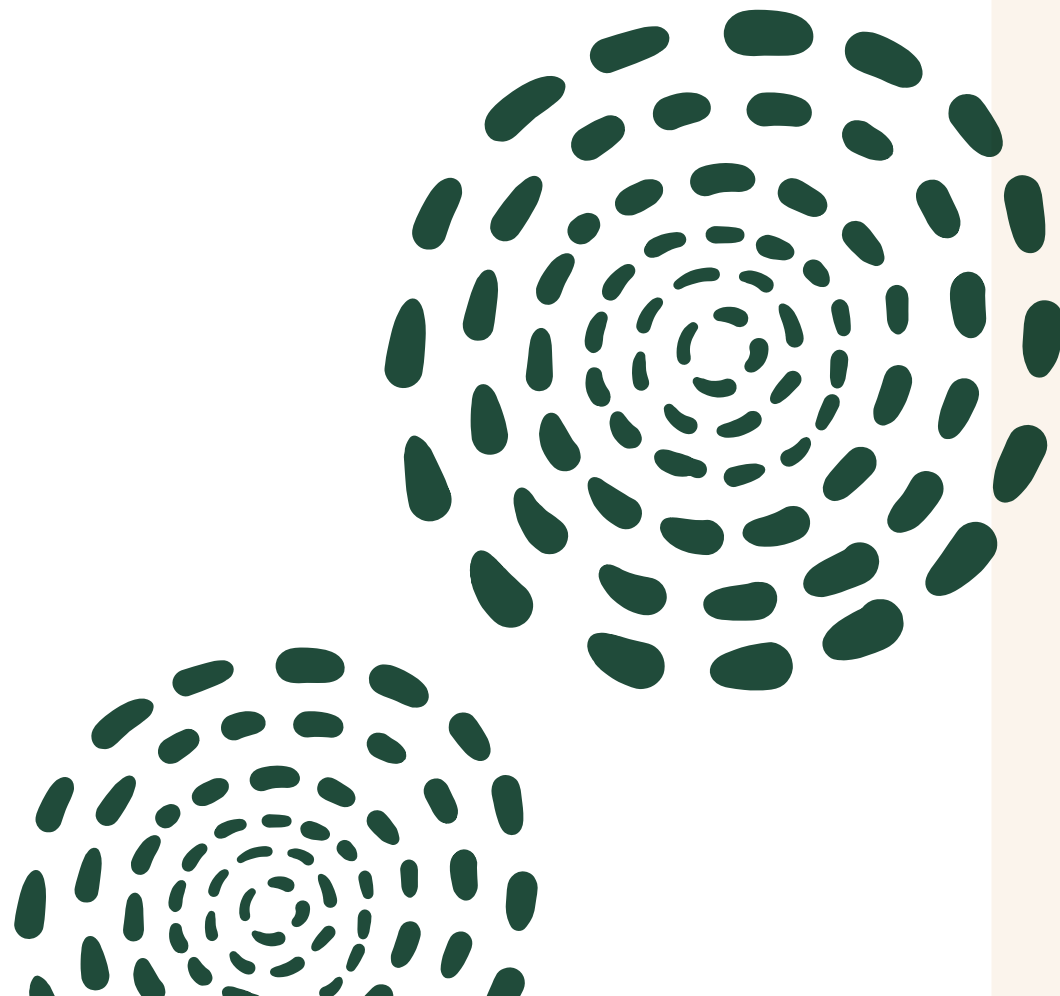
Amy Kurr (Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort); Alyssa Ramirez (Airbnb); APE Malaysia; Baja California Destination Management Organisation; Christian Buczek (DER Touristik Group); Constance Ephelia Resort; Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT); Daniel Quilter (Fuze Ecoteer); Dylan Walker (Wildlife Heritage Sites); Hannah Methven (Explore); Harry Eckman (World Cetacean Alliance); Estaban Delgado Serra (Preverisk Group); Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities; European Union (EU); Francesca Mahoney (WILD Survivors); FOUR PAWS International; Four Seasons Resort Maldives; Fundação Príncipe; Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation; Global Sustainable Tourism Council; Government of Seychelles; Hyatt Hotels Corporation; James Duquette (Discova); James Sano (WWF); Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities; Kasia Morgan (Travelopia); KATE; Linden Coppell (MSC Cruises); Mediterranean Institute for Advanced Studies (IMEDEA); Megan Morikawa (Iberostar); Melvin Mek (TUI Group); Michael Meyer (Linking Conservation & Tourism); Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova; Minister of Cultural Industry in the Republic of the Congo; Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (Mincetur) of Peru; MSC Foundation; NatureMetrics; New Zealand Tourism Board; New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Committee; Prue Stone (HotelPlan Group); Reefscapers; Rochelle Turner (Exodus Travel); Royal Government of Cambodia; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; Sarah Ivory (Whitbread); Secretariat of Tourism (Mexico); Sierra Leone Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs; Susanne Etti (Intrepid Travel); Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP); Suyin Lee (Discova); Swantje Lehnert (Futouris e.V.); Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary; The Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF); The Long Run; Timiş County Council (Romania); Tourism Industry Aotearoa; Tourism Industry New Zealand Trust; TUI Care Foundation; USAID Rural Competitiveness and Resilience Project; US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS); Wildlife Alliance; WWF Mexico; YAANA Ventures.

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