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About this document

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

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

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

Acknowledgements

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Table of Content

Key Messages

5 Key messages about a Nature-Positive Economy: An economy that gives back more to nature and society than it takes, leaving the world in a better state for future generations.

Key Message 1

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

The priorities of a NPE include increasing prosperity for all of society, restoring ecological conditions, and increased uptake of diverse values of nature in decision-making processes.

Full recovery means that nature recovers so that thriving ecosystems continue to support future generations. To ensure this all ecosystems must recover, as outlined by the targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework .

The nature-positive transition is a process, in which the end goal is a global economy that maintains a neutral ongoing impact on 'fully recovered' nature. The NPE is a transitional state for the global economy as it would deliver net gains for nature until a given point of recovery, such as achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework targets and/or being within planetary boundaries, at which point the economy would reach a stable state of living in harmony with nature.

Key Message 2

The Nature-Positive Economy is an umbrella term that mutually reinforces economic concepts such as the net-zero economy, bioeconomy, circular economy, green economy, and doughnut economy, but with a focus on biophysical limits, nature recovery, and social wellbeing.

A NPE goes beyond existing economic concepts as it explicitly aims for full nature recovery and subsequent maintenance of a global net nature-neutral economy, while ensuring prosperity for all of society.

The **Net-Zero Economy** is a response to the climate change crisis by developing an economy where economic growth is prioritised in climate neutral activities with lower carbon and energy-efficiency. There are potential synergies with a NPE, as the transition to nature-positive economic activities often also contributes to carbon reduction. **Bioeconomy** puts a higher value on nature extraction for economic gains, while a NPE places equal emphasis on shared prosperity and nature recovery within the context of economic gains. **Circular Economy** provides a valuable mechanism that can contribute towards a NPE through the increase in resource use efficiencies, but this alone is not sufficient to reach full recovery of nature. **Green Economy** places an emphasis on lower carbon and resource efficiency, with consideration for social inclusion. A NPE aligns well with **Doughnut Economy** principles by recognising the economy embedded within society and the living world, where economic activities need to be regenerative, circular, and socially just. A whole of society approach, grounded in respect for human rights, forms the foundation for a nature-positive economy.

As highlighted by IPBES, transformation of our current economic systems is required to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss.[1] This requires a prioritisation of respectful and reciprocal human-nature relationships, equity and shared prosperity, and a shift towards long term collective gain.

1 IPBES. (2024a). Summary for Policymakers of the Thematic Assessment Report on the Underlying Causes of Biodiversity Loss and the Determinants of Transformative Change and Options for Achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11382230

Key Message 3

> ***Operationalising the Nature-Positive Economy means that all actors take actions across scales and sectors, grounded in social well-being and equity to reduce nature-negative impacts, increase nature-positive actions, and enact transformative change.***

All **actors** in society have a role to play in shaping and working towards the NaturePositive Economy. There are three main roles of actors, with many actors playing multiple roles:

1. Actors who have high impacts and dependencies on nature: Businesses, including small & medium sized-businesses, nature-based enterprises
2. Actors who shape the economy: Policy-makers and governments, finance and investors, standards bodies, and Nature
3. Actors who encourage accountability: NGOs, researchers, education providers,citizens, civil society including youth, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Actions in a NPE span **spatial scales** from landscape to global, and **temporal scales** from immediate to long-term.The net result of all economic activities combined leads to nature positive across all **sectors**, rather than individual actions focused on one specific sector.

Social wellbeing and quality of life are dependent on nature, and are important elements of a NPE. The key principles to guide deliberate transformative change are: Equity and justice, Pluralism and inclusion, Respectful and reciprocal human-nature relationships, and Adaptive learning and action.[2]

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

2 IPBES. (2024a).

Key Message 4

> ***In a Nature-Positive Economy, economic growth may occur in industry sectors and activities that are well aligned with planetary boundaries.***

While the nature crisis exposes significant dependencies, impacts, and nature-related risks, the nature-positive economy also presents **opportunities** for innovation and nature positive growth. Nature-based solutions and nature-based enterprises offer important pathways towards a nature-positive economy.

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

Nature-based enterprises, such as agro-ecology farmers or green building providers, deliver nature-based solutions - either as stand-alone suppliers or integrated into corporate value chains. Nature-based enterprises are experiencing high market demand, and need support to scale and grow, creating more jobs as part of a just transition to a nature-positive economy.

The IPBES Nexus assessment identified 10 broad categories of action with the potential to simultaneously address biodiversity, water, food, health and climate change.[3]

Interdisciplinary collaboration is required to integrate these actions into economic policy.

3 IPBES. (2024b). Summary for Policymakers of the Thematic Assessment Report on the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food and Health of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.13850290

Key Message 5

It is essential to measure progress towards the Nature-Positive Economy.

Measuring progress towards the nature-positive economy requires an integrated whole of society approach, building on existing and emerging best practice, to assess the contributions of all actors. Single actors cannot claim to be 'nature-positive' in isolation, instead they can assess and disclose the extent to which they contribute towards the nature-positive transition. Such a transition must be measured through evaluations of improvements in social well-being and equity, which must go hand in hand with nature restoration, ensuring that efforts to regenerate nature are pursued alongside building fair and resilient societies.

While nature metrics often focus on biodiversity and capture a vital part of measuring the nature-positive economy, they need to be complemented by social and economic metrics. These additional metrics are essential both to reflect the socio-economic drivers of nature loss that must be transformed for long-term recovery, and to measure progress on societal factors and economic performance. To encourage accountability with naturepositive goals, commitments should include a measured biodiversity baseline with timeframes, targets, monitoring, and disclosure. The Nature-Positive Economy framework complements existing metrics and enables actors to identify the most suitable approach for assessing their contribution.

For more information and updates on the GoNaturePositive! project and forthcoming publications, we invite you to join our network for stakeholder engagement activities here.

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is twofold:

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

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

This document summarises the findings of a year-long multi-stakeholder consultation (March 2024 – March 2025) and literature review of policy documents and academic literature (see Appendix of Concept Note for detailed methods). The overarching questions we seek to address are:

a. What is the "Nature-Positive Economy"? What are the key elements of a NPE?
b. How can the NPE be operationalized?
c. What is the positioning of Nature-based Solutions and Nature-based Enterprises within the Nature-Positive Economy?

This Executive Summary is structured to guide readers through a comprehensive exploration of the Nature-Positive Economy. **Section 2** describes the need for a NPE and its foundation in the Nature Positive goal. **Section 3** introduces the definition of the NPE and places it in relation other economic concepts including bioeconomy and green economy. **Section 4** presents certain key elements of a NPE: operationalisation, actors, scales, and sectors. **Section 5** focuses on social wellbeing as a key element of a NPE and examines value pluralism as a foundational aspect for transformative change. **Section 6** examines the opportunities and trade-offs in a NPE. **Section 7** discusses how we set out to measure progress toward nature-positive outcomes and ensure accountability. **Section 8** concludes with next steps for GoNaturePositive! including pilot projects, stakeholder engagement, and the iterative co-design of NPE metrics and operational pathways.

Together, these sections lay an evidence-based roadmap, from definition and framing to measurement and implementation, to support the transition toward an economy that contributes more to nature than it takes.

2. Why a Nature-Positive Economy?

A Nature-Positive Economy (NPE) aims for full nature recovery while ensuring prosperity for all of society. A NPE reduces nature-related financial, economic, and supply risks for sectors most exposed to vulnerable value chains and contributes to national security and resilience. It enables competitiveness by creating new, meaningful and inclusive jobs in the field of nature recovery, supports the transition of existing industries to more sustainable business models, and helps mitigate the nature crisis, which undermines food security and threatens vulnerable communities.

The NPE builds on the Nature Positive (NP) concept that has been used by businesses, governments, and non-governmental organisations to indicate their alignment with global environmental goals. One leading definition of NP is from the Nature Positive Initiative (2023) that is to: "halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 on a 2020 baseline and achieve full recovery by 2050". Nature-positive actions aim to protect, restore and use nature in a sustainable way. These actions contribute to broader sustainability frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the KunmingMontreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), and the Paris Agreement on climate change. This integrated approach is vital for addressing the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

The current global economy has contributed to substantial degradation of nature as the diverse values of nature are not recognised by and incorporated into current dominant economic models and policy-making approaches. The compounding impacts of the triple planetary crises have a material impact on the economy and the financial sector. While over half of the world's total GDP is dependent on nature,[4] it is well established that our current economic systems are one of the main contributors to nature loss.[5] To protect our future, IPBES call for a transformative change in economic systems to address the underlying causes of nature loss.[6] This requires a prioritisation of equity and shared prosperity in economic systems based on a better understanding of reciprocal humannature relationships. This shift towards long term collective gain in economic systems is aligned with the focus of the nature-positive economy on full nature recovery and prosperity for all of society.

Despite the Nature Positive concept being well defined, there remains a lack of clarity on concrete pathways to realising a Nature-Positive Economy (NPE) that prioritises ecological recovery and social wellbeing.

4 WEF. (2020). Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy.
5 IPBES. (2024a); Dasgupta, P. (2021), The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review. Full Report. 610 pages. (London: HM Treasury) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-the-economics-ofbiodiversity-the-dasgupta-review
6 IPBES. (2024a)

3. What is a Nature-Positive Economy?

Definition of a Nature-Positive Economy

An economy is a Nature-Positive Economy when the net result of all economic activities combined leads to an absolute increase in nature, to the point of full recovery and prosperity for all. (Figure 1).

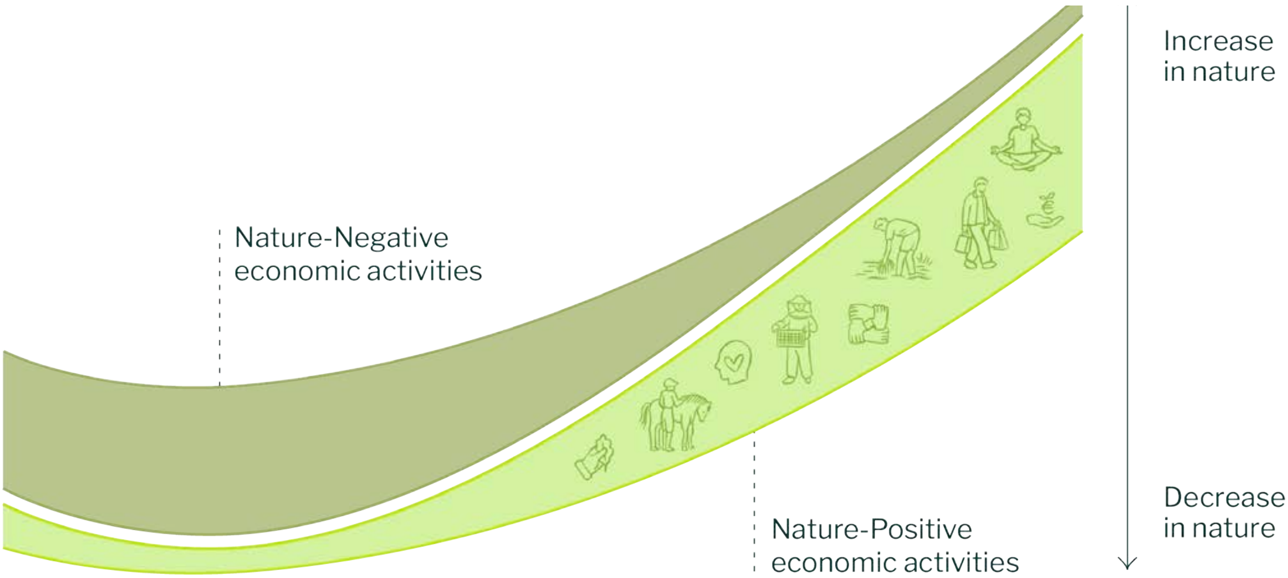


Figure 1. A NPE means that the net result of all economic activities combined leads to an absolute increase in nature, to the point of full recovery

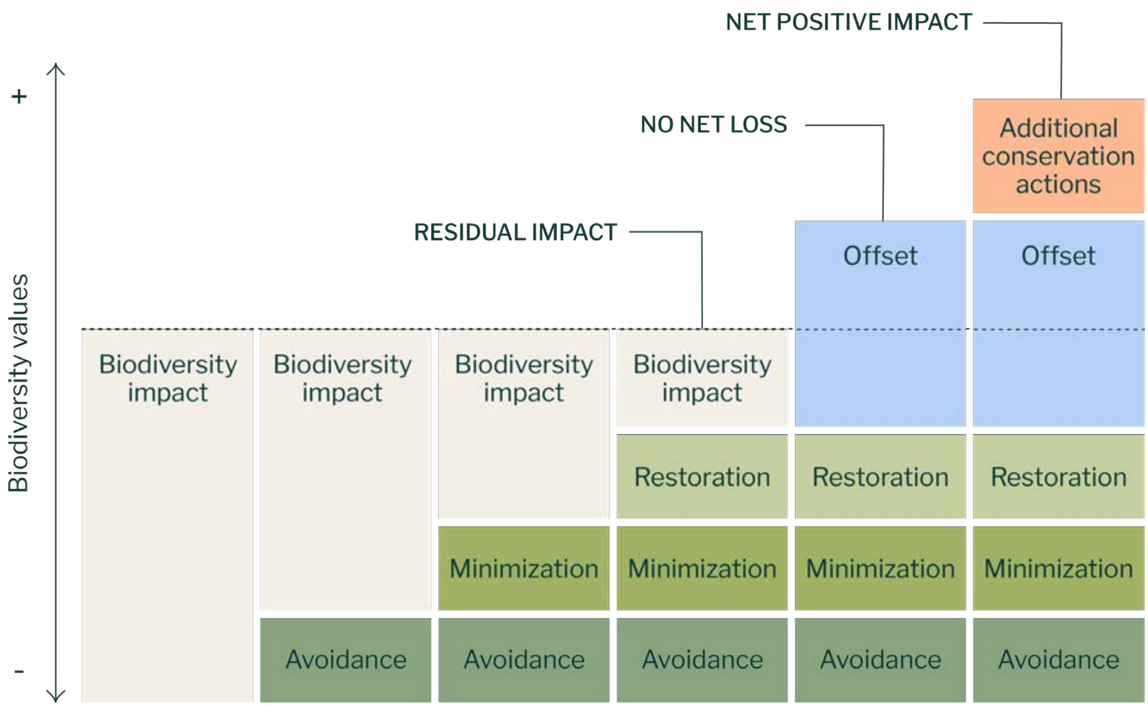
The priorities of a NPE include increasing shared prosperity, restoring ecological conditions, and increased uptake of diverse values of nature in decision-making processes. Full recovery means that nature recovers so that thriving ecosystems continue to support future generations. All ecosystems must recover, as outlined by the targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Nature-Positive Economy is envisioned as an ongoing process towards the goal of halting and reversing nature loss by 2030 and full recovery by 2050. The aim of a NPE is a global economy that maintains a neutral ongoing impact on a “fully recovered” natural world. The NPE represents a transitional phase, delivering net gains for nature until a certain point of ecological recovery, such as achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework targets. Beyond this point, the economy would achieve a stable state of living in harmony with nature, operating within planetary boundaries (see Figure 4). Some nature-negative economic activities may still occur during this transition period as long as the combined outcome overall is nature positive (Box 1). Nature refers to the natural world with an emphasis on its living components.[7]

Box 1. What is a net outcomes approach?

A net outcomes approach quantifies biodiversity losses and gains in an integrated framework, such as in No Net Loss or Net Gain policies that are often used in the mitigation hierarchy. This permits transparency as to whether biodiversity goals are being met.[8]

The mitigation hierarchy for managing biodiversity risk



7 IPBES. (2019). Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 1148 pages. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673

8 Bull et al. (2019). Net positive outcomes for nature. Nature Ecology & Evolution, 4(1), 4–7. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-019-1022-z; Aiama et al. (2015). No Net Loss and Net Positive Impact Approaches for Biodiversity: exploring the potential application of these approaches in the commercial agriculture and forestry sectors. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN

Net outcomes must be rooted in strong sustainability, where damage to ecologically irreplaceable or highly vulnerable nature should be avoided and that overall, nature is retained or restored in net terms.[9] A net outcomes approach is consistent with guidance by the Nature Positive Initiative, which has obtained consensus from its coalition of conservation, private sector, academic, and civil society members.[10]

Net outcomes acknowledge the complexity of economic systems, where not all activities can be immediately or fully nature positive. Some components of nature will continue to be reduced to allow for necessary improvements in human welfare locally (e.g. through food systems and infrastructure), but that such losses must be balanced by equal and additional gains in local ecosystems.[11] This requires inclusive methods and meaningful participation from all of society for an efficient deliberation on which aspects of nature loss are acceptable - for example through a citizens' assembly. This is especially important for actors such as farmers, indigenous peoples and local communities (see Section 5).[12]

9 Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme. (2012). Limits to What Can Be Offset. http://bbop.foresttrends.org/guidelines/Resource_Paper_Limits.pdf; Koh et al. (2019). How much of a market is involved in a biodiversity offset? A typology of biodiversity offset policies. Journal of Environmental Management, 232, 679–691. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2018.11.080

10 Locke et al. (2021). A Nature-Positive World: The Global Goal for Nature.

11 Maron et al. (2020). Global no net loss of natural ecosystems. Nature Ecology & Evolution. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-019-1067-z; Milner-Gulland, E. J. (2022). Don't dilute the term Nature Positive. Nature Ecology & Evolution, 6(9), 1243–1244. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-022-01845-5; IUCN. (2023). Measuring Nature-Positive Setting and implementing verified, robust targets for species and ecosystems. Technical Source document Consultation Draft. https://iucn.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/iucn-nature-positivecontribution-v1.0.pdf

12 Turnhout, E. (2018). The Politics of Environmental Knowledge. Conservation and Society, 16(3), 363. https://doi.org/10.4103/cs.cs_17_35

How does the NPE relate to other economic models?

The NPE closely aligns with core ideas of bioeconomy, circular economy, net-zero economy, and green economy, but with a focus on **biophysical limits, nature recovery, and social wellbeing**. A NPE goes beyond existing economic models as it explicitly aims for full nature recovery and subsequent maintenance of a global net nature-neutral economy, while ensuring prosperity for all of society. In a NPE, economic growth may occur in the context of industry sectors and activities that are well aligned with planetary boundaries. The emphasis of a NPE is on economic activities that restore nature, such as e.g. agroecology, regenerative tourism, ecosystem restoration, nature-based solutions (see Section 6).

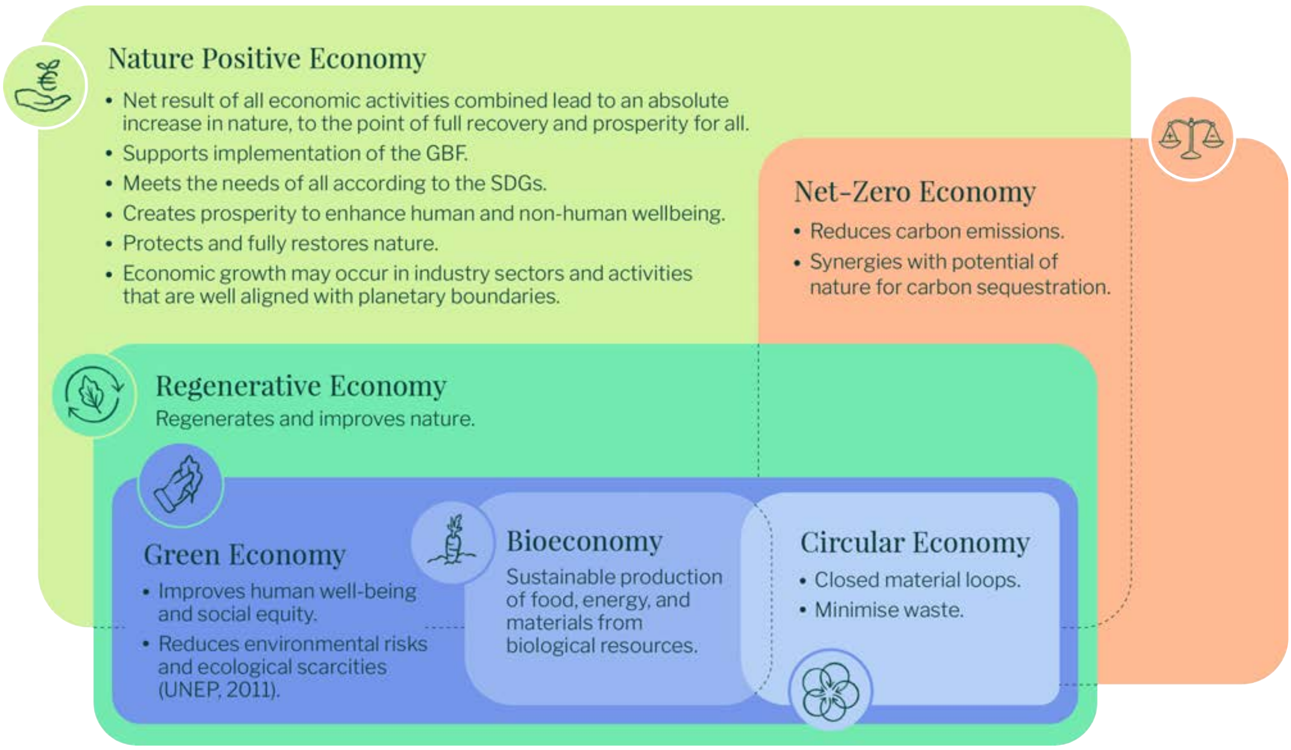


Figure 2. The NPE in relation to other economic concepts.

The **Net-Zero Economy** is a response to the climate change crisis by developing an economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. Economic growth is prioritised in activities that are climate neutral with low carbon, energy- and resource efficiency. There are potential synergies with a NPE, as the transition to nature-positive economic activities can often contribute to carbon reduction as part of a managed approach. A **Bioeconomy** based on sustainable biomass supply and demand that is able to manage healthy and resilient ecosystems is a prerequisite for a NPE. The bioeconomy takes a utilitarian view of nature and is more consistent with conventional economic approaches that put a higher value on extraction from nature for economic gains, while a NPE places equal emphasis on prosperity for all of society and nature recovery.

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

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

As highlighted by IPBES, transformation of our current economic systems is required to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss. [13] This requires a prioritisation of respectful and reciprocal human-nature relationships, equity and shared prosperity, and a shift towards long term collective gain.

13 IPBES. (2024a).

4. How to operationalise the Nature-Positve Economy

Operationalising the Nature-Positive Economy means that all actors take actions across scales and sectors, grounded in social well-being and equity (Figure 3).

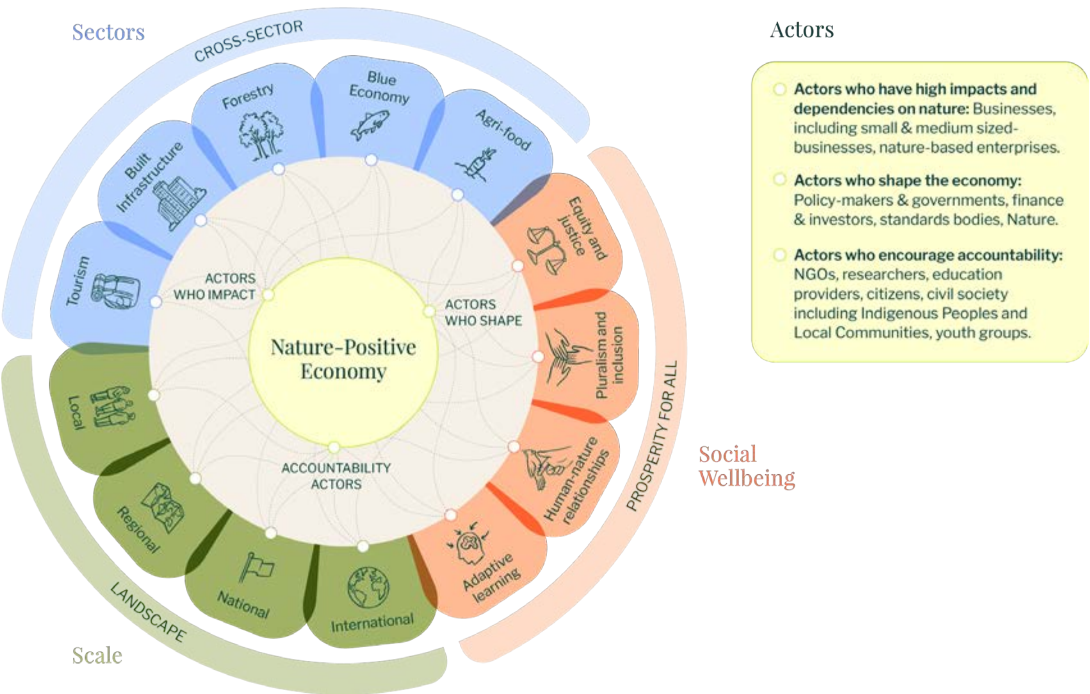


Figure 3. Elements of a Nature-Positive Economy: Actions, Actors, Sectors, and Social Wellbeing.

Actions

Actions to operationalise a nature-positive economy take many different forms across all actors, scales, sectors and societal goals. Immediate actions are required to:

- (i) **Reduce negative impacts** on nature and address drivers of nature degradation;
- (ii) **Increase positive actions on nature**, with a priority being increased deployment of nature-based solutions to protect, conserve, restore, and sustainably manage nature, and increased support for nature-based enterprises deploying such solutions.
- (iii) **Enact transformative change** towards full recovery on a societal scale (Figure 4).

These three actions necessitate a measured ecological baseline and a specified timeframe for change (as set out below).

Transformative change requires a system-wide reorganization across technological, economic, and social factors, including shifts in paradigms, goals, and values.[14] The IPBES Transformative Change assessment outlines main areas for action, where the NPE can play a crucial role in the areas of driving systemic change in sectors most responsible for biodiversity loss and transforming economic systems for nature and equity. Examples of actions are:

- Reform subsidies and incentives so that harmful sectors would be less profitable, such as redirecting environmentally harmful subsidies and encouraging investments in sustainable practices.
- Recognise and embed the diverse values of nature (instrumental, intrinsic, relational) into policy and decision-making. A range of valuation methods and value indicators (biophysical, socio-cultural, monetary) are available (see Section 5).
- Adopt metrics of progress that reflect social, cultural, and environmental dimensions, not just economic output (see Section 7).

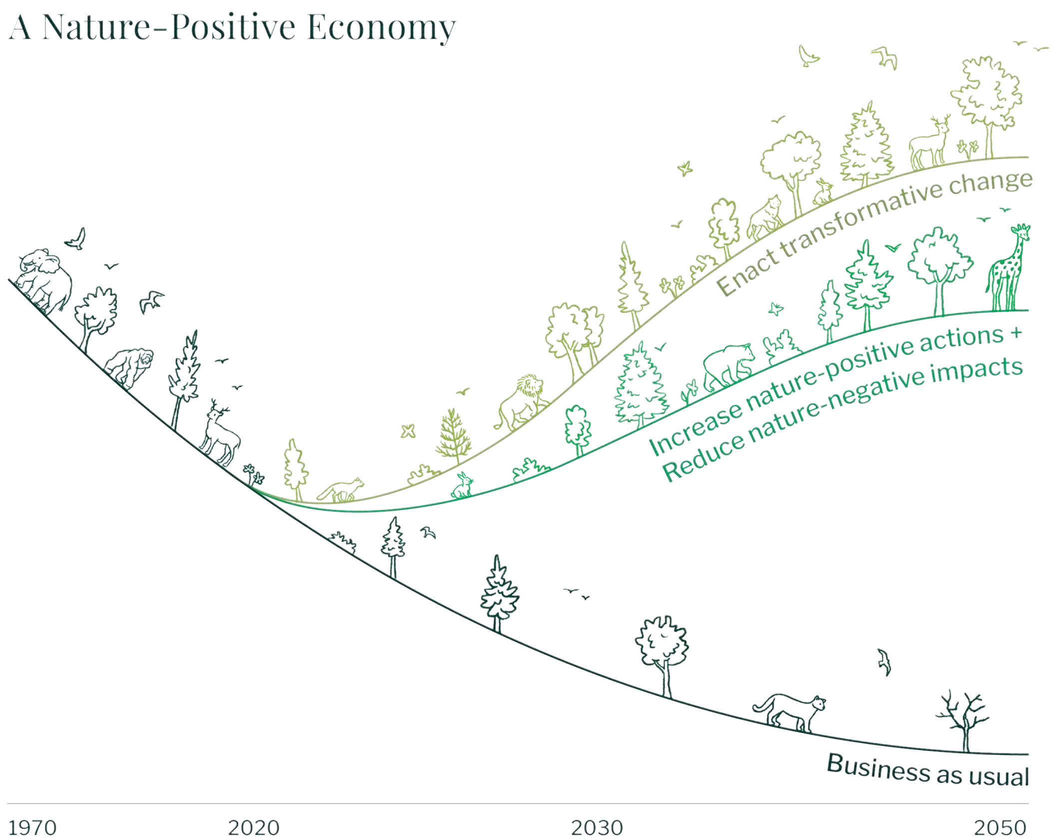


Figure 4. The nature-positive economy entails a transition away from a nature-negative economy towards an economy that is in harmony with nature and within planetary boundaries. Operationalising the nature-positive economy means to: 1. Reduce negative impacts on nature; 2. Increase positive actions on nature; and 3. Enact transformative change. Source: GoNP! adapted from Leclère et al. (2020).

14 IPBES. (2024a).

Actors

All actors in society have a role to play in a shaping and working towards a NPE. There are three main roles of actors, with many actors playing multiple roles:

- (i) Actors who have high **impact and dependencies** on nature: businesses including small and medium sized-businesses and nature-based enterprises;
- (ii) Actors who **shape the economy**: policy-makers and governments, finance and investors, standards bodies, Nature; and
- (iii) Actors who **encourage accountability**: non-governmental organisations, researchersand education providers, citizens and civil society groups including youth, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Combining this with an embedded representation of the economy in society and nature, shows us clear pathways through which different actors can work towards and shape the NPE (Figure 5).

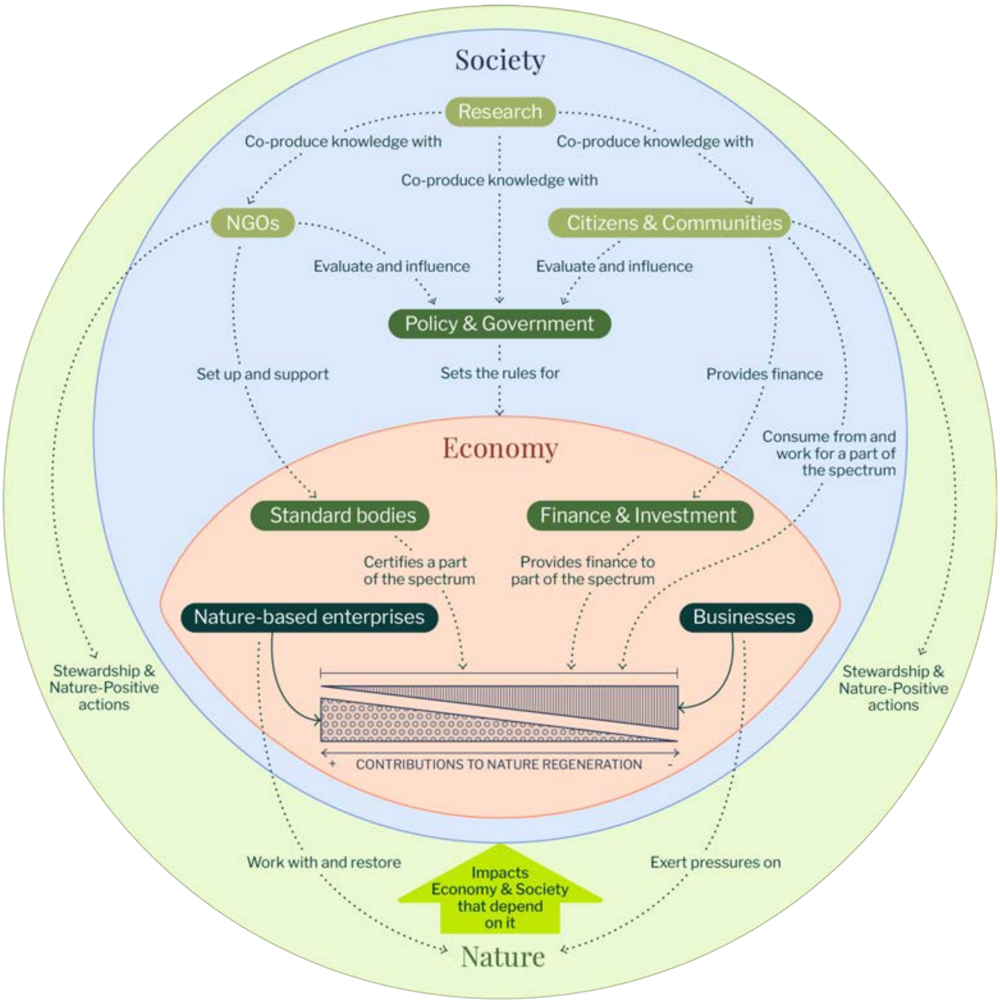


Figure 5. Actors and their interactions in a Nature-Positive Economy.

Nature is a relevant actor as the economy is embedded within nature, fundamentally dependent on its ecosystems for resources and services, and constrained by the planet's biophysical limits. Nature gives clear signals that we are exiting the safe operating space for humans, urging society and economy to drastically and rapidly change.

Furthermore, as seen in Figure 5, there is a spectrum between nature-based enterprises and businesses in terms of their contributions to nature regeneration. Naturebased enterprises integrate nature regeneration as a core part of their business model, while other businesses can move along this spectrum by enhancing their contributions through nature transition planning or by including nature-based solutions and naturebased enterprises in their supply chains.[15]

Scales

Actions in a NPE span **spatial scales** from landscape to global, and **temporal scales** from immediate to long-term. At the **global** scale, the NPE may require an equitable translation to country-level contributions based on different states of ecosystem degradation.[16] This can range from Net Gain in countries where restoration is needed, to Managed Net Loss in countries with extensive natural ecosystems and a stronger need to improve social foundations.

At **regional** and **national** levels, a holistic planning perspective is needed where governments can design their economic policies with a mix of economic instruments that are consistent with a NPE such as Do No Harm, Create additional nature (e.g., restoration), and Disclosure of non-financial performance. A **landscape** scale helps to overcome siloed sectoral approaches and deal with competing land uses (e.g., housing, infrastructure, food security, nature conservation).[17] Landscape approaches consider the integration of the sectors, supply chains, and stakeholders' interests in a landscape or seascape. At the **local** scale, tools such as environmental impact assessments provide the foundation for assessing nature impacts.

On a **temporal** scale, NPE actions identified in Figure 4 are needed across immediate, medium- and long-term timelines. Necessary **immediate** actions up to 2030 are outlined in the targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.[18] They require each actor to reduce their nature-negative impacts and increase their nature-positive impacts.

15 EU Commission. (2022). The vital role of nature-based solutions in a nature positive economy. Publications Office. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/307761; TNFD. (2024). Discussion paper on Nature transition plans. https://tnfd.global/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Discussion-paper-on-nature-transition-plans.pdf?v=1729942723

16 Maron et al. (2020).

17 Environmental Protection Agency Ireland. (2023). Evidence Synthesis Report 3: Land Use Review: Fluxes, Scenarios and Capacity. Government of Ireland. https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/evidence-synthesisreports/evidence-synthesis-report-3-land-use-review-fluxes-scenarios-and-capacity.php; Pettorelli et al. (2024). Prioritising Land Use in the Midst of a Climate and Nature Emergency—Ten Key Messages for Scientists, Civil Society, and Policy Makers. Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and the British Ecological Society (BES).

18 Convention on Biological Diversity. (2022). Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets

Medium-term activities include further embedding industry guidelines into national policies, transforming nature-negative sectors, and moving the private sector toward adopting nature-positive approaches and business models throughout their activities.

Opportunities exist to address climate-biodiversity crises simultaneously through integrating nature into reforms of the net zero transition. In the **long-term** up to 2050 and beyond, delivering nature-positive outcomes requires systemic change of dominant economic models underpinning global society towards ecological recovery and social wellbeing.[19] Enacting such transformative change requires immediate actions to plan for this transition.

Sectors

The NPE applies an integrated holistic approach in economic policy so that the net result of all economic activities combined leads to an absolute increase in nature — net nature positive across all sectors, rather than individual actions focused on one specific sector. A coordinated NP approach across spatial and sectoral scales can help, whereby national nature-positive pathways or a nature-positive transition in cities provide an overarching vision and guide the actions of actors across local, regional, and landscape levels (see Section 6).[20]

The aim would be to restructure incentives so that harmful sectors would be less profitable, such as redirecting environmentally harmful subsidies and encourage investments in sustainable practices.

At a sectoral level, systemic change should be focused in the sectors most responsible for biodiversity loss and nature's decline.[21] Targets and timeframes would be defined for actions to reduce negative impacts and increase positive impacts across sectors to transform economic systems for nature and equity.[22] Detailed NP sectoral guides are being developed by multiple initiatives worldwide.[23]

19 IPBES (2024a).
20 Aviva & WWF UK. (2024). National Nature-positive pathways to guide policy and private sector action. https://www.wwf.org.uk/our-reports/nature-positive-pathways; WEF. (2024). Nature Positive: Guidelines for the Transition in Cities. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Nature_Positive_Guidelines_for_the_Transition_in_Cities_2024.pdf
21 IPBES (2024a).
22 IPBES (2024a).
23 EU Commission. (2023). How to unlock nature positive in the Construction Sector. https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/da655eff-acfa-4b21-a366-2795d0e7de39/library/a6d47de1-c49a-4b14-bd90-974e66cb7ea5/details; WEF. (2020). New Nature Economy Report II: The Future Of Nature And Business. New Nature Economy series. https://www.weforum.org/publications/new-nature-economy-report-ii-the-future-of-natureand-business/; Business for Nature. (2023). Sector Actions Towards a Nature-Positive Future. https://www.businessfornature.org/sector-actions

5. Social wellbeing and Value Pluralism

Social wellbeing

Social wellbeing and quality of life are dependent on nature, and are important elements of a NPE. **Four key principles** have been identified by IPBES to guide transformative change in ways that address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and nature's decline:[24]

- Equity and justice: Ensuring fair distribution of benefits and responsibilities, and correcting historical and structural inequalities.
- Pluralism and inclusion: Valuing diverse worldviews, knowledge systems, and stakeholder participation in decision-making.
- Respectful and reciprocal human-nature relationships: Fostering stewardship and mutual care between people and nature.
- Adaptive learning and action: Embracing flexibility, learning from experience, and adjusting strategies as conditions evolve.

These principles are a precondition for systemic transformation to a nature-positive economy that prioritises social wellbeing alongside nature restoration. A whole of society approach, grounded in respect for human rights, is foundational for the nature-positive economy. A NPE must respect international human rights obligations, as laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[25] Social inclusion is an important factor for transformative change, with the need for more effective and proactive citizens involvement and social dialogue to build consensus.

24 IPBES (2024a).
25 UN General Assembly. (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

Value Pluralism

IPBES recognizes three types of nature-related values: instrumental (nature for society and the economy), intrinsic (nature for nature), and relational (nature as culture/one with nature).[26] **Value pluralism** entails recognising the diverse values of nature (instrumental, intrinsic, relational) with a range of valuation methods (nature-based valuation, behaviourbased valuation, statement-based valuation, integrated valuation) and value indicators (biophysical, socio-cultural, monetary). Current biodiversity policies and regulations tend to focus on instrumental values of nature through economic valuation approaches and monetary indicators.[27] Balancing market-based instrumental values of nature with relational, intrinsic, and non-market instrumental is needed to demonstrate the diversity of ways in which nature matters to people.

A NPE recognises the diverse values of nature through plural valuation methods and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Metrics and indicators of progress can be revised to promote an economic development paradigm that centres restored ecological conditions and increased human wellbeing. This requires indicators that capture impacts of industries and businesses on social and ecological values. A wide range of metrics are available, such as the UN System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EA) to a whole range of beyond GDP indicators such as the Happy Planet Index and the Genuine Progress Indicator.[28]

Moreover, meaningful stakeholder engagement entails recognizing diverse worldviews values held by stakeholders, rights-holders, and knowledge-holders for long-term collaboration and co-creation of solutions to conserve and sustainably use nature.[29] This involves the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), the integration of traditional ecological knowledge into decision-making, and respect for their customary governance. The principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent must be adhered to, as specified in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Industry guidance is being developed by the Taskforce on Nature related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) on engagement with IPLCs.[30]

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26 IPBES. (2022). Summary for policymakers of the methodological assessment of the diverse values and valuation of nature of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) (Version 1.2). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.6522392

27 Pascual et al. (2023). Diverse values of nature for sustainability. Nature. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-023-06406-9; Schaafsma et al. (2023). Whose values count? A review of the nature valuation studies with a focus on justice. Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability, 64, 101350.

28 UN SEEA Ecosystem Accounting. (2021). https://seea.un.org/ecosystem-accounting; Happy Planet Index (n.d.). https://happyplanetindex.org/; Talberth et al. (2006). The genuine progress indicator 2006. A Tool for Sustainable Development, Oakland; Liu et al. (2024). A comprehensive Beyond-GDP database to accelerate wellbeing, inclusion, and sustainability research. Scientific Data, 11(1), 1166. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41597-024-04006-4

29 IPBES. (2022).

30 TNFD. (2023). Guidance on engagement with Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and affected stakeholders. https://tnfd.global/wpcontent/uploads/2023/08/Guidance_on_engagement_with_Indigenous_Peoples_Local_Communities_and_affected_stakeholders_v1.pdf?v=1695138220

6. Opportunities and Trade-offs

Opportunities in Nature-based Solutions and Nature-based Enterprises

While the nature crisis exposes significant dependencies, impacts, and nature-related risks, the NPE also presents new opportunities for innovation and nature-related growth in sectors and activities that are aligned with planetary boundaries. For example, "The transition to a nature-positive economy could create 395 million jobs by 2030".[31] A NPE could also contribute to national security and system resilience as it strengthens the ability of the economy to withstand financial, environmental or other shocks.[32]

Nature-based solutions (NbS) and nature-based enterprises (NbE) offer important pathways towards a nature-positive economy. Nature-based solutions can help to reduce impacts and risks to business and the economy from nature loss, while simultaneously restoring nature and creating benefits for wider society. Integrating nature-based solutions, like agro-ecological/regenerative farming practices and natural water management solutions, into the value chains and operations of businesses makes good business sense. Nature-based enterprises, such as agro-ecology farmers or green building providers, deliver nature-based solutions - either as stand-alone suppliers or integrated into corporate value chains. Nature-based enterprises are experiencing high market demand, and need support to scale and grow, creating more jobs as part of a just transition to a nature-positive economy. Investing in NbS could create up to 32 million new jobs by 2030.[33]

31 WEF. (2020).
32 OECD. (2020). Beyond Growth: Towards a New Economic Approach. OECD. https://doi.org/10.1787/33a25ba3-en
33 ILO & IUCN. (2024). Decent Work in Nature-based Solutions: Unlocking jobs through investment in skills and nature-based infrastructure. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/Decent%20work%20NbS%202024_EN_0.pdf

Trade-offs between nature-negative and nature-positive activities

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

At a **landscape** scale, SBTN's landscape approach to corporate nature targets involves engaging with and improving ecological conditions in key landscapes within a company's value chain. Their Landscape Engagement target includes indicators such as land use, land use change, and soil pollution.[34] Another example of guidance is the Integrated Landscape Management that emphasizes partnerships and long-term collaboration among multiple stakeholders.[35]

At a **national and sectoral** scale, national sectoral pathways can be set out to deliver the nature-positive goals set out in the GBF.[36] National Nature-Positive Sectoral Pathways are national strategies that will guide policymakers and the private sector on how different economic sectors should contribute towards the GBF targets and the country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan – by 2030 and beyond. These should be integrated with existing sectoral pathways to net zero, and explicitly consider the tradeoffs between objectives to set out a country's transition to a nature-positive, net-zero economy. At a sectoral scale such as in agriculture, this involves first creating space for nature's recovery both on and off farmland. Secondly, minimising the potential negative nature impacts – and maximising positive nature impacts – of ongoing agricultural practices.

At a **company** level, the EU Business and Biodiversity Platform recommends that naturepositive commitments should apply to the entire value chain, which consists of upstream, direct operations, and downstream.[37] A company should demonstrate nature-positive outcomes within their sphere of influence. Moreover, positive impacts need to outweigh negative impacts in each part of the value chain and in all these parts the net balance needs to be positive. Corporate natural capital accounting techniques can be used as a method of balancing impacts per nature component.[38]

There are also potential synergies, as the IPBES Nexus assessment identified [10] broad categories of action with the potential to simultaneously address biodiversity, water, food, health and climate change.[39] Interdisciplinary collaboration is required to integrate these actions into economic policy.

34 SBTN. (2024). Landscape Engagement Target. https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/companies/take-action/set-targets/land-targets/address-landscape-pressures/
35 EcoAgriculture Partners. (2022). A Practical Guide to Integrated Landscape Management. 1000 Landscapes for 1 Billion People. https://landscapes.global/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ILM_Practical_Guide_DEC22.pdf
36 Aviva & WWF UK. (2024).
37 EU Business and Biodiversity Platform. (2022). Nature positive in a business context: current working definition. https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/da655eff-acfa-4b21-a366-2795d0e7de39/library/e758f73e-c2bb4b53-92ec-34c5af804a1e/details
38 EU Business and Biodiversity Platform. (2022).
39 IPBES. (2024b).

7. Measuring progress

It is essential to measure progress towards the Nature-Positive Economy to foster effective action and avoid greenwashing.[40] Several private and public initiatives are available to assess impacts on and the state of nature, commit to science-based targets, disclose progress, and transform systems and operations to reduce harm and regenerate nature. Typically, these frameworks are designed to support particular actors (e.g. governments, companies, corporations, financial institutions) at particular scales, from site-specific to national scales. Moreover, they tend to be specialized for a specific audience (e.g., large corporations) and focus on one type of metric (e.g., nature-related metrics). While this makes them valuable state of the art frameworks for specific actors and aspects, it also means they are not able to capture all important aspects of a NPE for which progress should be measured.

The important aspects of a NPE for which progress should be measured can be summarised as follows (see concept note for details):

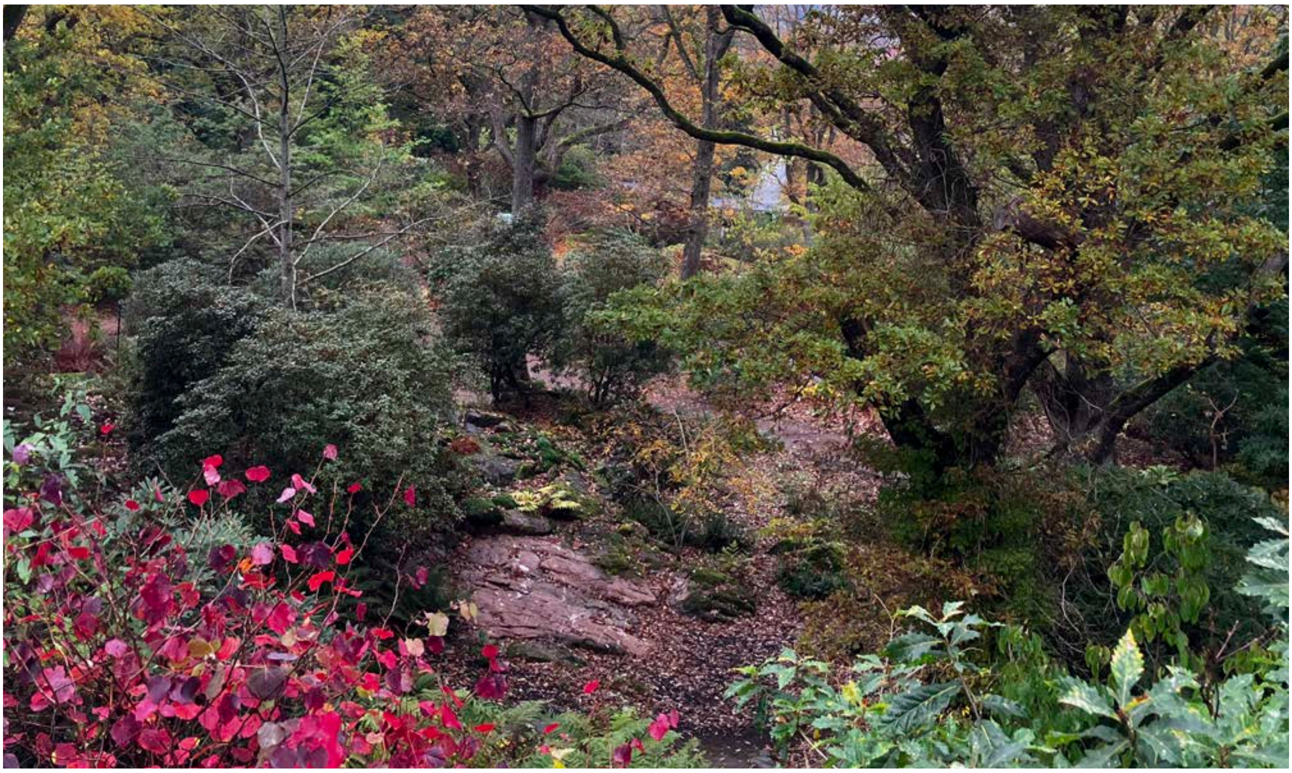
1. There needs to be a **net increase in nature, to the point of full recovery**.
2. **Transformation of our current economic systems** for nature and equity is required to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss.
3. **Actions** needed to operationalise the NPE:
    a. Negative impacts on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

40 Smith et al. (2019). Corporate reporting and conservation realities: Understanding differences in what businesses say and do regarding biodiversity. Environmental Policy and Governance, 29(1), 3-13; MarcoFondevila, M., & Álvarez-Etxeberría, I. (2023). Trends in private sector engagement with biodiversity: EU listed companies' disclosure and indicators. Ecological economics, 210, 107864; White et al. (2023). Identifying opportunities to deliver effective and efficient outcomes from business-biodiversity action. Environmental Science & Policy, 140, 221-231

Therefore, within the GoNP! project, an integrated framework is developed that is applicable in all sectors and can be used by all actors to assess their contribution towards the Nature-Positive Economy. This framework firmly builds on the definition and framing of the NPE provided in the Concept Note. It uses a whole-of-society approach and integrates not only ecological, but also societal and economic dimensions, within a strong sustainability vision. The framework guides the selection of scale-, actor- and sector specific indicators and metrics covering all the important aspects of the NPE, either through what is measured or how it is operationalized. Operationalizing the NPE needs to be done by multiple actors, at multiple scales and in all sectors. It is challenging to create one set of indicators to measure progress that can be applied in all of these contexts.

Therefore, the GoNP! measurement framework is meant to be made operational through translating it to the specific context, as will be done within the pilots of the project itself. Nonetheless, it is imperative that translations of the framework still measure the important aspects of the NPE, which will be ensured through a comprehensive set of “guiding principles”.

Through our GoNP! measurement framework, existing indicators and metrics can be combined in a coherent framework to promote an economic paradigm that centres restored ecological conditions and increased human wellbeing. In line with Key Messages 2 and 4, the NPE advocates for a shift away from conventional GDP growth metrics, towards a model that places equal emphasis on ecological health, biodiversity enhancement, social wellbeing, and prosperity. These complementary metrics are essential both to reflect the socio-economic drivers of nature loss, as outlined by the IPBES Transformative Change Assessment that need to be transformed for long-term recovery, and to measure progress on societal factors and economic performance.



8. Next Steps in the GoNaturePositive! Project

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

As part of Pillar One (2024 – 2025) of the GoNP! project, this Concept Note outlines a conceptualisation and framing for a Nature-Positive Economy that can clarify and support policy-makers and governments, businesses, NGOs, civil society, researchers, and standard bodies in their work to decouple economic development from environmental degradation and create a sustainable economic pathway for future generations. This Concept Note further provides the framing and basis of analyses and activities across the GoNP! Project from Pillar One to Pillar Four (See Figure 6).

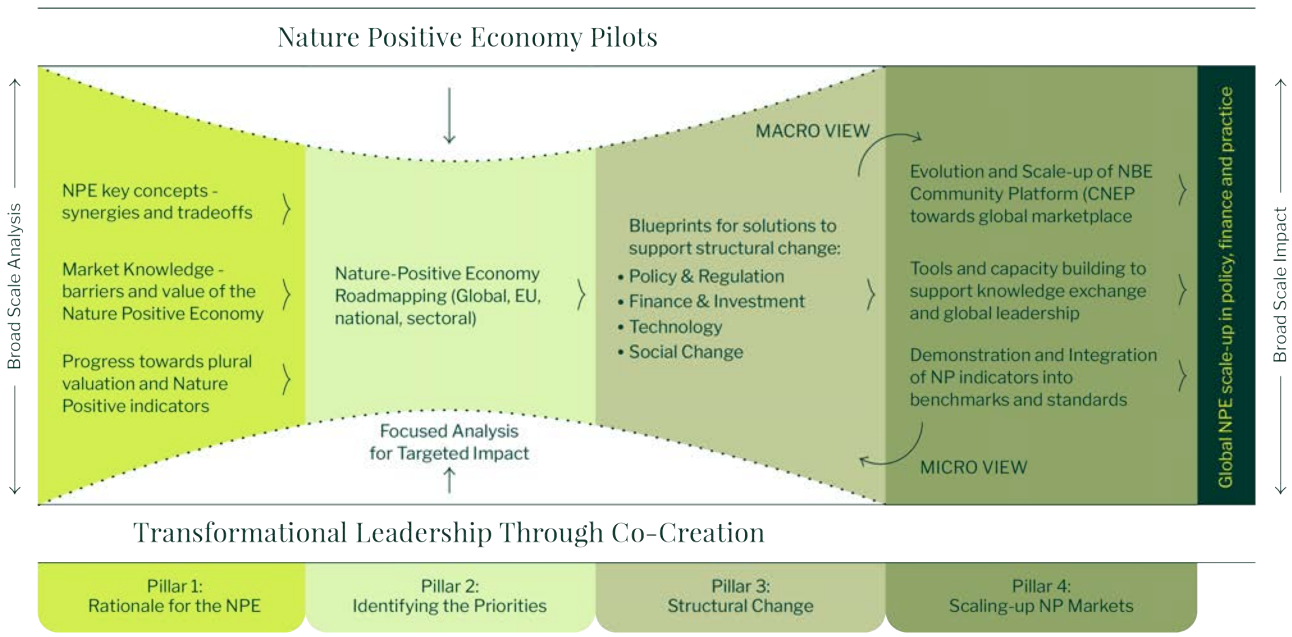


Figure 6. Overview of GoNP! methodology and connection across Pillars.

The actions to operationalise the Nature-Positive Economy – reduce negative impacts on nature, increase positive impacts on nature and enact transformative change – provided the frame of analysis for Deliverable 1.3 'Mapping policy and co-operate initiative landscapes for systemic change towards a nature-positive economy' and associated five sector policy briefs.[41] Deliverable 1.3 identified and analysed core policies, strategies and co-operative initiatives with regards to their alignment or conflict with systemic change towards a NPE, as well as synergies and trade-offs between different policies.

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

Compiling market evidence and insights on the extent to which Europe's economy is Nature Positive builds on this concept (Deliverable 1.1) along with the development of criteria and indicators for measuring progress of indicators (Deliverable 1.3) producing a market report and data set repository – Deliverable 1.4 'State of the market report on NPE activities' - planned for February 2027.

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

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

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

40 Kupilas et al. (2025). Mapping policy and co-operate initiative landscapes for systemic change towards a naturepositive economy (Deliverable 1.3). GoNaturePositive! Horizon Europe Grant Agreement No. 101135264, European Commission. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15309698; Davis et al. (2025). Sectoral Brief: Tourism. GoNaturePositive! Horizon Europe Grant Agreement No. 101135264, European Commission. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15516997; Burgos et al. (2025). Sectoral Brief: Forestry. GoNaturePositive! Horizon Europe Grant Agreement No. 101135264, European Commission. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15517031; Kupilas et al. (2025). Sectoral Brief: Built Environment. GoNaturePositive! Horizon Europe Grant Agreement No. 101135264, European Commission. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15517015; Elkina et al. (2025). Sectoral Brief: Blue Economy. GoNaturePositive! Horizon Europe Grant Agreement No. 101135264, European Commission. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15517005; McDonald et al. (2025). Sectoral Brief: Agri-food Systems. GoNaturePositive! Horizon Europe Grant Agreement No. 101135264, European Commission. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15516986

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Deliverable 1.1
Framing the Nature-Positive Economy: Key Messages and Executive Summary

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