

Regenerating Destinations
Through Nature Positive Tourism



NATURE POSITIVE ACTION SHEET

1 Regenerating Destinations Through Nature Positive Tourism

The Travel & Tourism sector is uniquely interdependent with nature, relying on healthy ecosystems and natural landscapes more than most others. This creates a strong incentive for the sector to reduce its own negative impacts on nature and help mitigate other pressures on biodiversity caused by either human activity or natural processes.

In both rural and urban destinations, there are many opportunities for Travel & Tourism to support the protection and restoration of biodiversity. Often these opportunities benefit the businesses themselves – not only by helping meet nature-related targets but also by engaging customers, developing products, increasing competitiveness and enriching the destinations they serve.

To identify and act on opportunities to restore nature, tourism businesses must navigate multiple issues relating to biodiversity needs and actions. Building on the principles outlined in **Nature Positive Travel & Tourism in Action**, the first joint output of the Nature Positive Tourism Partnership, this insight will explain how to approach the key steps to regenerating your destinations: understanding the destination state of nature, identifying opportunities to support and restore it, and building partnerships for effective action.

Key Terms

Biodiversity: the variety and abundance of all living things on earth, or in a specific area.

Key Actions:

- 1 Prioritise destinations**
Evaluate business relevance, impact footprint and local biodiversity pressures.
- 2 Target action areas**
Identify critical nature challenges where your efforts can create real change.
- 3 Choose impactful and catalytic engagement methods**
Select the most effective way to apply your influence and resources.
- 4 Identify strategic partners**
Engage diverse stakeholders to amplify reach and effectiveness.
- 5 Forge lasting partnerships**
Commit to long-term collaboration built on mutual respect and shared goals.

By implementing this guidance, businesses can expect to:

- Make informed decisions about where and how to invest in nature restoration in destinations.
- Build purposeful, effective partnerships to achieve nature protection and restoration goals.
- Understand the state of nature in key destinations.
- Develop strong relationships with in-country actors such as national authorities, local communities, biodiversity experts and like-minded businesses.
- Demonstrate credible results, measurable co-benefits and viable business cases to stimulate catalytic actions and attract further partners and investment.

Every business affects nature, and in Travel & Tourism many impacts occur indirectly in the destinations we visit, from national parks to urban centers. The Nature Positive Tourism approach turns this reality into an opportunity. By aligning business growth with actions that halt and reverse biodiversity loss, companies can strengthen brand value, meet sustainability targets, and enhance destination appeal. Supporting nature protection or restoration in destinations is not just good for the planet, it is good for business. The key is to choose initiatives that align with core operations and strategic goals, deliver measurable and lasting benefits for nature, and are developed in collaboration with governments, experts, and local communities.

Nature restoration: actions that enable or accelerate the recovery of natural areas that have been damaged, degraded or destroyed.

State of nature: an assessment that considers the size and condition of natural areas together with the status of animal and plant species and current trends in these situations.

NBSAP: National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, as required under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

1 Prioritise destinations

Multi-destination businesses should start by selecting where to focus their biodiversity support.

- **Action:** Create a manageable shortlist of destinations to review. Include those with the highest footfall and where wildlife and nature (including natural areas, e.g. beaches or scenery) are a major offer.
- Conduct a basic assessment of the state of nature in each of these destinations, and the opportunities to enhance it. Gather information from online sources, as well as through local offices, partners and suppliers.
- Select initial focus destination(s) based on the greatest threats to nature, also considering existing business sustainability commitments (e.g. access to water, biodiversity protection, etc.).

Tip: Ideally, assess business dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities (see in upcoming Action Sheet 2) and select destinations where these are greatest.

2 Target action areas

Decide what issues, activities or locations to work on, and how to go about it.

- **Action:** Build a solid understanding of the nature priorities of destinations, such as vulnerable species/ecosystems, sensitive locations and key threats to biodiversity (e.g. hunting or agricultural expansion).
- Engage with national tourism authorities to understand how nature and tourism interact, and what their strategic priorities are.
- Choose an initial focus area that is relevant to the business, for instance one that relates to business dependencies and impacts, locations visited, or the local supply chain.

Tip: Use the National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (NBSAP) to identify potential actions that align with national strategy. If necessary, upskill staff or outsource some of the research.

3 Choose impactful and catalytic engagement methods

Choose how the business will go about influencing the focus issue(s).

- **Action:** Consider all ways that the business could generate a positive impact and leverage further benefits. These could include: project funding; logistic or in-kind support; adapting business operations; engaging suppliers & partners; and working with government agencies.
- Consider the roles of and impacts on local communities & Indigenous peoples, and how these groups can be engaged and involved in any activities. Approach communities with respect, looking for opportunities to support local leadership and recognise local knowledge.
- Select an action, or a suite of actions, that fit with business priorities and opportunities to exert influence, while having a meaningful impact on nature. Also look for additional benefits such as uplifting communities or providing Nature-based Solutions.

Tip: Public-Private-Community (PPC) partnerships can be a very effective way to leverage change, with businesses, government bodies such as Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) and local people working together for shared goals.

***Nature-based Solution:** an action which harnesses natural processes to address societal challenges, including Natural Climate Solutions (e.g. restoring ecosystems to sequester carbon).*

4 Identify strategic partners

While some changes to direct operations can be managed entirely in-house, most actions will require collaboration with other entities.

- **Action:** Compile a list of potential partners for each engagement pathway and assess their suitability. Consider: suppliers, commercial partners and T&T peers; government agencies (including local and protected area authorities); NGOs and civil society groups; local communities and Indigenous peoples; educational or research institutions; and coalitions, forums and working groups.
- Choose the best partner (or set of partners) for each activity. Consider how they each contribute to the project's goals and objectives – a 'theory of change' approach may help. Look for a good initial fit with long-term development opportunities, not just a 'quick win'.

Tip: With NGO partners especially, look for evidence of authenticity and effectiveness such as regular reports, scientific & policy outputs, use of best practice guidance (e.g. IUCN recommendations, Society for Ecological Restoration principles), reputable existing partners, and existing knowledge from local offices / destination partners.

5 Forge lasting partnerships

Real benefits for nature take time, flexibility and deep collaboration. In the long run, the business will gain much more from an enduring partnership of equals than from a string of short-term grants.

- **Action:** Co-create a 5-10 years vision for the project that encompasses an array of outcomes, opportunities and commitments. Clarify the shared goals and the roles of each partner in achieving them.
- Consider how partnerships can work for mutual benefit – successful relationships rely on all partners receiving some advantage, so look at opportunities from all perspectives.

Tip: Be flexible and embrace new ideas and approaches – challenging assumptions about how a partnership might work can open the door to exciting opportunities.

– KEY STEPS – For Businesses to Restore Nature and Regenerate Destinations



*Business Dependencies, Impacts, Risks & Opportunities

Outputs & Outcomes

These outputs will enable the implementation of a robust programme of action for nature in destinations:

- ✓ Strategic plan for actions to benefit nature
- ✓ State of nature information for key destinations
- ✓ Profile of relevant partnership opportunities
- ✓ Framework for developing impactful collaborations and partnerships

Troubleshooting

1. *Where can I access destination state of nature information?*

- Convention on Biological Diversity – NBSAPs and national targets & reports
- Local organisations including national authorities & tourism bodies
- Online databases, both open access and paid-for
- Local NGOs & academic institutions
- Existing local suppliers & partners and DMOs
- Developing internal capacity or out-sourcing to specialist consultancy

2. *How can I identify suitable in-destination partners?*

- National environment / wildlife authorities, including National Park management
- Existing suppliers and partners
- International conservation associations, societies and networks
- Internet research (with careful verification)
- Building capacity in smaller organisations or developing multi-partner project to cover range of roles

Case Studies

Wild Survivors + Nomad Tanzania

Wild Survivors is an NGO working in Tanzania to reduce elephant poaching, restore land, empower women and strengthen livelihoods. Nomad Tanzania has supported their activities through a long-running partnership to conserve the African elephant through community-led conservation.

Exodus Adventure Travel

As part of its Thriving Nature, Thriving People plan, Exodus Adventure Travel has launched Citizen Science departures on many of its tours, collecting eDNA samples from freshwater sites in destinations. At the end of each trip the results are not only relayed to the guest, explaining which species have been detected, but also contribute to a worldwide eBioAtlas helping conservationists build a better picture of the planet's biodiversity.

Barbados Environmental Conservation Trust

The Barbados Environmental Conservation Trust (BECT) is a catalyst for environmental action across Barbados. Supporting a range of grassroots projects from habitat restoration on land and at sea to organic and sustainable farming, BECT works to protect and restore the natural environment. Through its \$1 Initiative – where hotels and restaurants add \$1 onto every bill to support BECT projects – it already has close ties with the tourism sector, enabling local businesses large and small to become Guardians of Nature.

Policy context

- Reporting: **TNFD**, **GRI**, ESG
- Policy: GBF (14/15/16); SDGs (8/12/13/14/15/17)
- Recommendations: IUCN-TAPAS

Further Reading / Additional support

- **Nature Positive Travel & Tourism**, WTTC – p20-25; Phase 2 Step 2 p.41; p47-48
- **Toolbox of Nature Positive Tourism Resources**, WTTC – Phase 2 Step 2 p.9-13; p20
- **Nature Positive Travel & Tourism in Action**, WTTC – Phase 2 Step 2 p.23-28; p33-35
- **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans**, CBD
- **National Biodiversity Targets**, CBD
- **Tourism and Biodiversity - Achieving Common Goals Towards Sustainability**, UNWTO – p.45-49, p.57
- **The Integration of Biodiversity in National Tourism Policies**, UNWTO – p.7-9, p.39-40
- **Strengthening Sustainable Tourism's Role in Biodiversity Conservation and Community Resilience**, IUCN

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Nature Positive Action Sheets

Support Travel & Tourism's united mission to accelerate efforts to reverse biodiversity loss, reduce associated risk and achieve net positive for nature.



Produced in collaboration with:

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