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PLANET-FORWARD Strategies

Connecting Climate and Nature to Advance Corporate Sustainability Action and Performance

pure INSIGHT™

Contents

About Pure Strategies

Pure Strategies has been transforming business through sustainability performance since 1998. Our team helps companies initiate and advance existing sustainability programs by setting meaningful sustainability goals, devising effective management strategies, and making changes to products and supply chains that deliver value to the business and society. Our clients include Ahold Delhaize USA, Ben & Jerry's, Seventh Generation, Everlane, MegaFood, Stonyfield, VF Corp, Walmart, and many others. Pure Strategies is proud to be a certified B Corp.

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Summary

The relationship between climate and nature is complex and interconnected. The success of climate strategies is closely linked to the success of nature strategies, and the success of nature strategies is connected to the success of climate strategies.

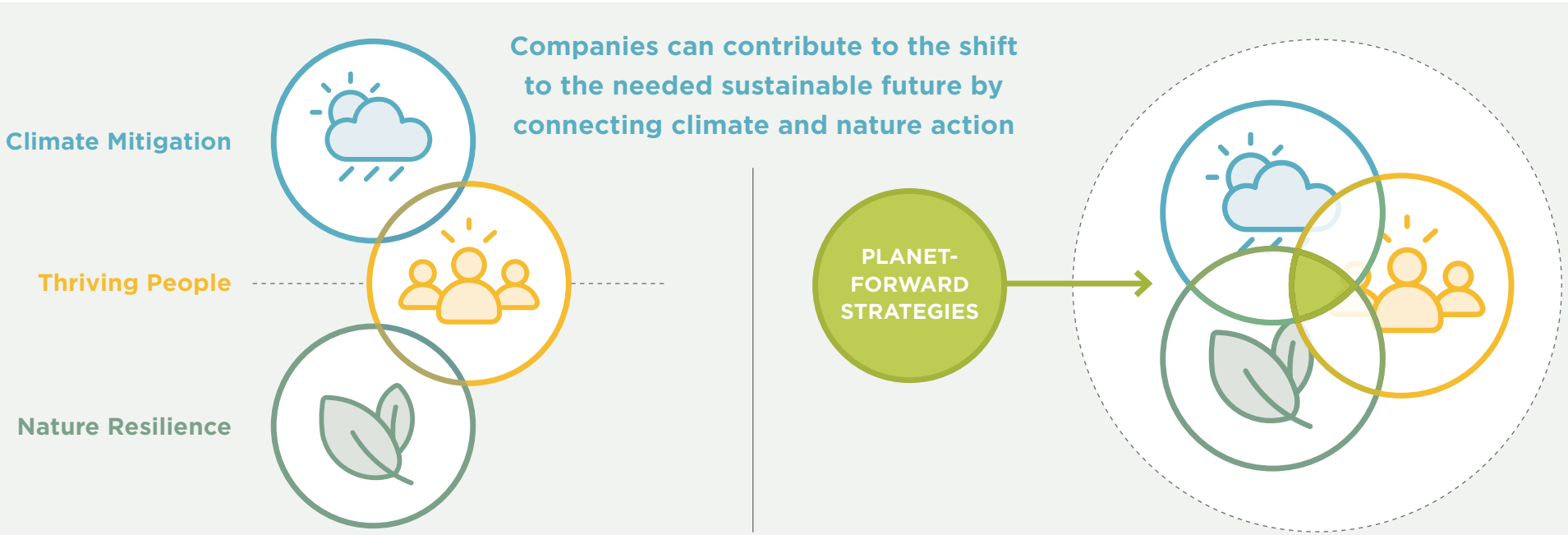
> **Corporate efforts need to take an integrated climate and nature approach**, where a climate strategy includes a nature strategy and a nature strategy includes a climate strategy, referred to here as a planet-forward strategy.

Planet-forward strategies include understanding and advancing the connection points between climate and nature, and also effectively advancing each to support the other.

> **The aims should be science-based**, for climate and nature, and engage communities impacted and dependent on changes (e.g., Indigenous communities).

Mitigation and resilience plans are critical elements of a planet-forward strategy — this means reducing and removing greenhouse gas emissions and building and supporting healthy biodiversity and ecosystems.

> **Planet-forward strategy actions include protection, restoration, sustainable management**, and careful consideration of the social aspects of these efforts.



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Introduction

Faced with the dual crises of climate change and nature loss, **leading scientists** implore greater and more urgent progress globally. **Critical life support systems and human life is in peril, and long with it, current and future business value is threatened.** Companies can help steer toward the needed sustainable future by **connecting climate and nature corporate actions through integrated planet-forward strategies**.

This report provides guidance for companies early in their nature journey, that have not intentionally included a clear nature plan in their climate strategy, or do not yet have a nature plan.

Dual Crises

The climate has **already warmed** 1.1°C and the window to take action is rapidly closing **to prevent the worst consequences** of climate change that are already starting to be a reality. **This includes** cutting carbon dioxide emissions by 48% from 2019 levels by 2030 and reaching net-zero emissions by 2050.

Further, **human activities** have modified 77% of land area (excluding Antarctica) and 87% of ocean area driving notable biodiversity losses and threatening the survival of 1 million species and the lives of billions of people. Scientists have warned that the loss of habitat and plant and animal species is leading us to the **Anthropocene**, the sixth greatest extinction event in Earth's history.

Business value opportunities with planet-forward strategies

COST SAVINGS

- Efficiencies
- Employee engagement/ productivity
- Synergies in projects

RISK REDUCTION

- Regulatory compliance
- Supply chain and operational resilience
- Energy cost stabilization

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

- Reputational gains
- Innovation
- Higher stock price
- Greater product sales

Nature

includes natural ecosystems and realms such as the climate, lands, oceans, freshwater, and biodiversity (animals, plants, and all living things).

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The **Global Biodiversity Framework** defines targets to increase the amount of the world's land and ocean protection to at least 30% each, along with restoring 30% of degraded ecosystems by 2030 to achieve full recovery by 2050 for a habitable climate, quality of life, and self-sustaining biodiversity. These aims and related efforts are summarized in **Table 1**.

Each **danger is exacerbating the other**. Impacts on nature, such as loss of habitat, drive about 25% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and climate change is a top driver of nature losses.

Without protecting and restoring the earth's ecosystems there is no chance of achieving science-based climate goals, limiting warming, or buffering the impacts of an already disrupted climate — nature is needed to both meet GHG emission reduction goals and to maintain a stable climate. Further, a stabilized climate is needed to support thriving natural systems.

For example, growing regions for tea are often in higher elevations, a high-risk area with climate change due to warming effects (refer to Table 2). Sustainable management of production areas, e.g., with agroforestry or **diversified production**, is one approach to support both climate and nature aims, but even further it is important to protect and restore biodiversity on neighboring lands to provide additional ecosystem services (e.g., water cycling, soil protection, temperature regulation). An **effort established by IDH** in a Kenyan tea-growing region and the neighboring tropical Mau forests aims to deliver this integrated approach — "it becomes imperative to prioritize the protection and restoration of the Mau forest to safeguard our environment and agricultural livelihoods."

> "Measures narrowly focused on climate mitigation and adaptation can have direct and indirect negative impacts on nature and nature's contributions to people."
>
> — IPBES/IPCC

TABLE 1. Current Frameworks for Climate and Nature, While Seemingly Separate, Intentionally Align With and Support Each Other Across Both Topics (Along With Reporting Frameworks Such As CDP)

	CLIMATE	NATURE
Global Authorities	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
Global Agreements	Paris Agreement	Kunming-Montreal/Global Biodiversity Framework
Ambitions	Limit warming to well below 2 degrees, ideally 1.5 Degrees by 2050	Halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, conserve 30% land and water, and 30% restoration of degraded ecosystems by 2030 (and **other global goals**)
Strategies	Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)	Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)
Targets	Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)	Science Based Targets Network (SBTN)
Actions	Mitigation, Adaptation	Avoid, Reduce, Restore/Regenerate, Transform

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The relationship between climate and nature impacts/opportunities

Nature is the natural carbon emissions pool/storage/sponge

- Terrestrial and marine ecosystems currently absorb half of human-made carbon emissions
- Nature-based climate solutions can contribute up to 30% of emissions mitigation needed

Nature helps buffer climate change impacts

- Ecosystems absorb heavy precipitation and stores the moisture for lower precipitation times, protects from land/soil erosion, and manages temperature extremes and air quality

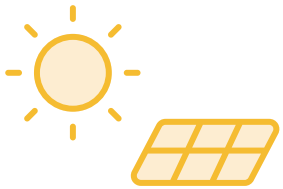
Nature loss leads to GHG emissions, e.g., forests, marine disruptions, soil

- Impacts to nature drive 25% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

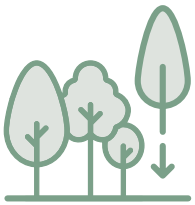
Warming and climate-related impacts drive nature loss and damage

- Increased mean temperatures, altered precipitation, increased extreme weather, oxygen depletion, and acidification lead to nature loss
- Climate change is likely to become the dominant cause of biodiversity loss in the coming decades

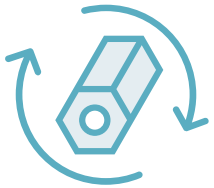
SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF MANAGING TRADE-OFFS



Solar panels can be set up with biodiversity protected and managed instead of cleared fields



Ensure that tree planting is in an appropriate location and uses native and diverse species to support climate mitigation and ecosystems instead of monocultures or exotic species



Utilize recycled metals instead of managing pollution in mining new metals

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A Disconnection

Companies are not including nature in their sustainability programs or at least not strategically since they focus on climate primarily as the lead issue. When there are nature efforts, many businesses manage them separately and largely inadequately, such as one-off conservation projects, or by omitting critical approaches like protection and restoration within and beyond value chains. This persists despite the clear direction from global authorities that climate and nature are fundamentally intertwined.

According to **S&P Global Sustainable1** research in 2023, the most frequent commitment related to nature and biodiversity by companies is deforestation. However, just 13% of S&P 500 companies have a deforestation-related commitment.

Recent corporate guidance has signaled a shift. In 2022, the **Science Based Targets initiative** (SBTi) added a deforestation-free requirement in their guidance on climate targets for forest, land, and agriculture sectors. The European Commission's 2023 **Regulation on Deforestation-free Products** is, in part, an action to support climate strategies.

However, many companies look at these and other nature commitments and requirements, such as the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) and the Science Based Targets Network (SBTN), as separate efforts that they lack the internal appetite and/or resources for. Critically, companies need to reframe their approach so that climate and nature are an integrated strategy, a planet-forward strategy.

TABLE 2. Examples of the Ecosystems That Are Most Vulnerable to Climate Change and Also Provide Critical Climate-adaptive Services (Source: IPBES/IPCC 2021)

CRITICAL CLIMATE-ADAPTIVE ECOSYSTEMS	CLIMATE IMPACTS DRIVING NATURE LOSSES
Tropical coral reefs	Warming, acidification
Savannas	Higher atmospheric OC2
Tropical forests	Drying
High latitude and altitude ecosystems	Warming
Mediterranean-climate ecosystems	Warming
Coastal ecosystems	Multiple factors

> "Nature is a critical and undervalued ally in the fight against climate change, helping us both slow global warming and adapt to the climate impacts that are affecting communities around the world."
>
> — WORLD WILDLIFE FEDERATION

> "Measures narrowly focusing on protection and restoration of biodiversity have generally important knock-on benefits for climate change mitigation, but those benefits may be sub-optimal compared to measures that account for both biodiversity and climate."
>
> — IPBES/IPCC

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Planet-forward Strategies

The most effective path forward in addressing the dual crises is integrating climate and nature strategies. This includes understanding connection points but also effectively advancing each to support the other, specifically with GHG emissions **mitigation** and nature **resilience** plans.

Most companies have been developing mitigation or decarbonization plans, such as energy efficiency. These largely defensive plans focus solely on ways to drive GHG emissions down. While some actions overlap with nature aims, such as deforestation-free commitments and regenerative agriculture, there are typically critical success factors missing with a focused view on climate.

What is often missing is a view to the services that natural and complex ecosystems provide. This requires more efforts and more holistic approaches to protect and restore nature. This often means reaching beyond the value chain and looking to do more than avoiding and reducing impacts.

Planet-forward strategies include a mitigation and resilience plan that includes protection, restoration, and sustainable management actions. This applies to both within and across projects.

- Within projects: consider both climate mitigation and nature resilience for a single effort (e.g., add biodiversity and water actions and metrics)
- Across projects: include projects specifically aimed at each of the action areas of protection, restoration, and sustainable management

Winning planet-forward strategies include:

Plans

MITIGATION + RESILIENCE

Actions

PROTECT + RESTORE + SUSTAINABLY MANAGE

Climate strategies are typically defensive approaches to reducing and removing GHG emissions, which are necessary, but the offensive side is also needed to restore nature and build resilience for long-term effectiveness.

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In other words, the aims should be science-based, including a net-zero carbon footprint and a nature footprint (area of the planet used for the business's value chain) that is sustainably managed plus area protected and restored.

Measuring land use or footprints is discussed by the **Greenhouse Gas Protocol** in its draft Land Sector and Removals guidance. Extending this to cover land, terrestrial waterways, coastal areas, and marine areas is considered a nature footprint. Both TNFD and SBTN discuss how to look at the location-specific considerations for this footprint to inform priority interventions.

Further, the **Global Biodiversity Framework** includes targets for 30% of nature protected and 30% of degraded ecosystems restored by 2030. While these are global targets, a company can apply the concept to their planet-forward strategy using its nature footprint to guide the planning and investment.

This is more than utilizing **nature-based solutions**. This is also not about using offsets to manage climate issues. This is a strategic approach, linked to a company's value chain, integrating climate and nature assessments, commitments, and actions (projects, measurement, reporting) needed for human prosperity.

The good news is that since there is such a close relationship between climate and nature, this should not be insurmountable. Companies currently focused on climate can begin transitioning to a planet-forward strategy.

This includes considering nature dependencies (relying on nature, e.g., carbon sequestration) and impacts (changing the quality or quantity of nature, e.g., land clearing). Importantly, this also includes educating internal leadership and teams about how the climate strategy includes a nature strategy (and vice versa).

For companies early in their nature journey or largely focused on climate plans, the following are questions about your climate efforts to help transition to a planet-forward approach:

1. CLIMATE HOTSPOTS AND DRIVERS

- What are the nature dependencies and impacts related to these climate hotspots and drivers?
- Have you identified emissions from land use and land use change?
- Are there nature hotspots beyond these climate ones that could support resilience?
- Are there location-specific nature priorities for these hotspots, dependencies, and impacts?
- How are the local communities, workers, and Indigenous People impacted by the hotspots and drivers?

2. CLIMATE DECARBONIZATION PROJECTS

- How is nature integrated into these projects (i.e., supporting protection, restoration, and sustainable management)?
- What nature impacts and benefits are being tracked?
- How much of the business' nature footprint can be sustainably managed through these climate projects?
- How much of the climate decarbonization project investment includes nature protection and restoration?
- How much area does this protection and restoration investment cover (compared to the business' nature footprint)?
- Are there additional nature projects that support resilience, such as at priority locations?
- Are there opportunities to work with other stakeholders to integrate and amplify a nature focus into these climate projects?
- How will the local communities, workers, and Indigenous People be consulted and included in projects?

3. CLIMATE RISK SCENARIOS AND DISCLOSURES

- How has nature been included in the climate risk scenarios?
- How do the climate and nature scenarios consider both operations/corporate assets and the broader value chain?

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Protect

Protecting an area for long-term conservation of ecosystem services and cultural values is more than a nice-to-do philanthropy activity. Nature protection is a critical action to include in planet-forward plans. This includes mitigation efforts for deforestation and conversion free (DCF) aims but also resilience efforts such as supporting the conservation of key biodiversity areas.

This action does not need to be within value chains, while that can be desirable it is important to protect high priority locations such as critical climate-adaptive ecosystems (see Table 2). So, adjacent or beyond value chain locations should be supported.

Guayakí — maker of yerba mate beverages sources shade-grown, certified regenerative, organic, and fair trade yerba mate and other ingredients. As part of their high sourcing standards, Guayakí supports conservation and restoration projects within the producer communities in the Atlantic Forest of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina where the company sources their high-quality yerba mate. In 2022, Guayakí helped plant over 60,000 yerba mate and other native tree species across these landscapes. In Brazil, for example, they also helped plant vegetation buffer zones within yerba mate plots that increase biodiversity and connect local ecological corridors within production areas, adding native trees from over 30 different species and tall grasses — many of which were supplied by the Marrecas Indigenous community's native tree nurseries.

Walmart is a member of the Consumer Good Forum and aligned with the commitment to achieve zero net deforestation in their supply chain, with a focus on palm oil, pulp and paper, timber, beef, and soy. **Walmart** also has a commitment to conserve one acre of land for every acre developed by Walmart U.S. stores. Since 2005, Walmart helped conserve over 2 million acres through the Acres for America partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

One of many recent projects aim to permanently protect wildlife habitat of national significance and increase public access to the outdoors, benefiting local communities and economies included protecting more than 31,000 acres of forestland in the Katahdin Region of Maine, with most of the land returned to the Penobscot Nation in the heart of their ancestral homelands.

Kering, luxury brand house (Gucci and others), aims to restore and regenerate a million hectares of its supply chain and protect one million hectares of critical, irreplaceable habitat by 2025.

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Restore

Restoration refers to halting and reversing ecosystem degradation and recovering biodiversity. Company **action in restoration** includes investing in landscape protection and restoration projects within and beyond value chains, with a particular focus on areas of high conservation value, such as restoring peatlands and wetlands, native species reforestation and connecting critical wildlife habitats. This can **include restoring natural** ecosystems and sometimes transformed (e.g., farming) ecosystems — when the outcomes are to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity, and connectivity.

Nature restoration is among the **cheapest and rapidly implemented** nature-based climate mitigation measures and is critical. However, it is important to be sure that both nature and climate are planned for. For example, in a reforestation project be sure to work in areas where there would naturally be forests and utilize native and diverse species.

Peatlands are a priority ecosystem for climate and nature restoration. These ecosystems cover only about 3% of Earth's surface but **store about 30% of all land carbon** — sequestering at least as much carbon as all the world's forests. **The Nature Conservancy** established a peatland restoration program in the United States with carbon credits through The American Carbon Registry (ACR).

Kering and Conservation International launched the Regenerative Fund for Nature in 2021, with Inditex joining in 2023, with the aim of transforming 1,000,000 hectares of crop and rangelands in fashion's supply chains into regenerative agricultural spaces by 2026. Among **the first projects** funded was an effort with Solidaridad to work with Creole and indigenous smallholder cattle/leather producers to restore native forests and vegetation in grazing areas in the Gran Chaco biome in Argentina.

Including nature in a planet-forward integrated strategy helps identify where actions should take place on the ground, especially restoration of the areas that are degraded along the value chain.

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Sustainably Manage

The difference between sustainable management and restoration is that there is less of an ecosystem improvement approach in the former. These efforts are more familiar to companies since they are typically found in decarbonization plans, but their connection to nature is also more limited and more about reducing impacts. However, efforts should be made to better connect to both climate and nature, such as transitioning away from fossil fuels along with nature-based mitigation and resilience solutions.

Sustainable management should work to reduce impacts and to avoid further damage, such as:

- **Fuels and chemicals:** transition to renewable sources, pollution prevention, and safer substitutes
- **Agriculture:** reduce fertilizer use and input, improve yield, and increase soil carbon pools
- **Forestry**: sustainable management and diverse forest species
- **Demand:** reduce waste and advance circularity (e.g., use recycled content)

Nestle works to protect, restore, and sustainably manage climate and nature across their business. They **state**, "This is the start of a broader and much larger global conservation and restoration strategy to remove more carbon and deliver important ecosystem services in the landscapes we source from. Our ambition is to make conservation and restoration standard practice throughout our supply chains."

FIGURE 1. NESTLE'S FOREST POSITIVE COMMITMENTS

I. DEFORESTATION-FREE SUPPLY CHAINS

Achieve and maintain **100% deforestation-free supply chains** using tools like farm assessments, certification and satellite monitoring:

By 2022 for palm oil, sugar, soy, meat, and pulp and paper;

By 2025 for coffee and cocoa.

› *Read more*

II. LONG-TERM FOREST CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION IN OUR SUPPLY CHAINS

Ensure **proactive action** to keep forests standing and restore degraded forests and natural ecosystems while respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

› *Read more*

III. SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

Forest Positive engagement at scale to transform the key landscapes we source from for the future.

› *Read more*

> "Our ambition is to make conservation and restoration standard practice throughout our supply chains."
>
> — NESTLE

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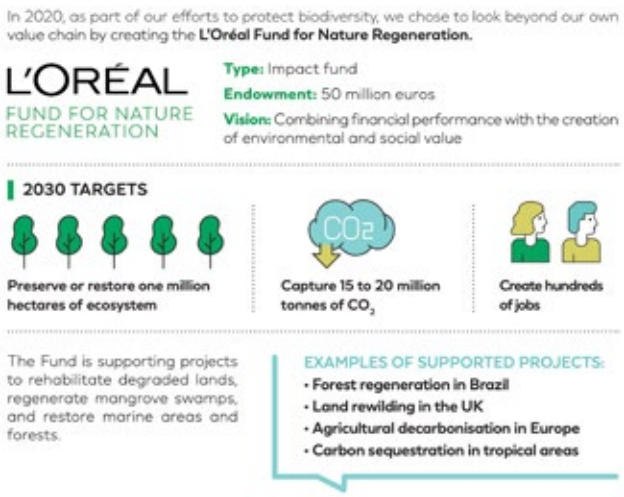
The L'Oréal Groupe has both value chain and beyond value chain climate and nature connected efforts. This includes, among other targets:

- Hold flat the total land occupancy vital to the sourcing ingredients by 2030, compared to 2019.
- 100% of the bio-based ingredients for formulas and packaging materials will be traceable and will come from sustainable sources by 2030. None of them will be linked to deforestation.
- 100% of the company's industrial sites and all operated buildings will have a positive impact on biodiversity by 2030, compared to 2019.
- 1 million hectares of ecosystems will be restored by 2030.

This last commitment is managed through the groupe's **Fund for Nature Regeneration** and in addition to working to preserve or restore one million hectares of ecosystem, they estimate that this work will capture 15-20 million tonnes of carbon dioxide.

FIGURE 2. THE L'ORÉAL GROUPE'S FUND FOR NATURE REGENERATION



Planet-forward strategies include reduction and resilience plans that address all three action areas: protect, restore, and sustainably manage.

PROTECT

- Avoid deforestation
- Avoid coastal wetland conversion
- Avoid species overexploitation
- Prevent invasive species
- Support existing and new conservation efforts, especially in areas critical for biodiversity
- Support frontline communities who are protecting nature (within, adjacent, or beyond value chains)
- Support the establishment of new conservation areas, especially in areas critical for biodiversity

RESTORE

- Reforestation
- Grassland restoration
- Peatland and coastal wetland restoration
- Marine environment and fishery restoration
- Riparian zone restoration
- Restoration and conservation of agricultural margins (e.g., low production areas)
- Regenerative and soil health agricultural practices with biodiversity/ecosystem aims (grazing, croplands)
- Agroforestry (within, adjacent, or beyond value chains)

SUSTAINABLY MANAGE

- Efficiency improvements in agriculture and forestry (yield, nutrients, inputs)
- Sustainably managed forestry
- Regenerative and soil health agricultural practices without biodiversity/ecosystem aims (grazing, croplands)
- Climate smart energy and fuels (efficiency and renewable sources)
- Pollution prevention (soil, chemicals, plastics)
- Circularity, waste prevention (commonly within value chains or regions)

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People

When assessing and planning climate and nature efforts, the connection to people needs to be included. In particular, the climate and nature crises inherently have inequities. **IPCC notes**, that populations disproportionately at higher risk of climate change include disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, some indigenous peoples, and local communities dependent on agricultural or coastal livelihoods.

Further, **IPBES and IPCC note** that "biodiversity loss disproportionately impacts those communities and societal groups that are most directly dependent on nature." For example, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' are particularly vulnerable to nature loss due to their cultural, social and spiritual connections, in addition to reliance on nature for access to food, shelter, and water. **Indigenous communities** manage less than a quarter of the earth's surfaces but protect 80% of global biodiversity, so their engagement in decisions is essential for positive social as well as ecological outcomes.

TABLE 4. Priority Approaches for Planet-forward Strategies

	EXAMPLE PROJECTS	EXAMPLE BUSINESS VALUE
Energy	Renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind) with biodiversity restoration and sustainable management	Stabilized and potentially lower energy costs
Forests	Protection, reforestation, and agroforestry with native and diverse species	Regulatory compliance and reputation risk management
Agriculture	Landscape level regenerative and soil health practices with integrated conservation areas that are sustainably managed	Supply chain resilience, business growth
Oceans and Freshwater	Protection, restoration, and sustainable management of fisheries and coastal ecosystems	Supply chain resilience, business growth
Demand-side	Circular solutions to avoid waste and utilize recovered materials; protect land/marine area equal or greater than what is needed for the business	Supply chain resilience, reputation gains, innovation

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Next Steps for Planet-forward Strategies

Companies may be at different starting points on their climate and nature programs. The below table provides a roadmap for companies to find their current status and then map next steps to progress on planet-forward strategies.

Roadmap to progress on planet-forward strategies

	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	ADVANCING	LEADING
Explore	Materiality assessment of climate and nature, business value	Impact assessment and footprint of operations (GHGs, nature)	Impact assessment and footprint of value chain (GHGs, nature)	Risk scenario and impact assessment of value chain (GHGs, nature), using primary data for hot spots
Define	Internal policies based on regulations, customers, and investors	Plans for operations for climate and nature	Plans for value chain and public commitments for climate and nature	Science-based, value chain commitments for climate and nature
Activate	Ad-hoc actions	Operations measure and report progress (CDP, company reports)	Value chain plans and measure and report progress (TCFD, TNFD)	Beyond value chain plans and progress (e.g., collaboration, advocacy), verification of progress
Integrate	Compliance orientation	Operations engaged	Cross-functional and leadership engagement	Employee and board engagement, business model changes

Pure Strategies provides expert advisory support on building and implementing planet-forward strategies, at all stages. Contact our team at **info@purestrategies.com**.

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Resources for Planet-forward Strategies

Both climate and nature, and their connection, are actively advancing areas. As a result, there are a growing number of resources available to support corporate progress. We encourage businesses to utilize such resources, including those cited in the report and the below resources.

- Business for Nature **Guidebook**
- Business for Nature **Sector Actions**
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) **Nature Based Solutions**
- **Nature4Climate**
- Naturebase free **co-benefit app**
- Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) **Forest, Land, and Agriculture** (FLAG)
- Science Based Targets Network (SBTN) **Resources**
- Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) **Recommendations**
- Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) **Recommendations**
- TNFD **Guidance on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and Effected Stakeholders**
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) **Roadmaps to Nature Positive**
- World Wildlife Federation (WWF) **Our Climate's Secret Ally**
- WWF **Living Planet Report**

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