

TOWARDS A NATURE-POSITIVE ECONOMY

Panel Discussion Interview Series by
Centre for a Smart Future (CSF) in collaboration with Echelon Media

Background Note: An introduction into Nature-positivity

This note is compiled to provide panelists with context on CSF's focus on a nature-positive economy, and an introduction to the existing discussion on nature-positivity.

Humanity is facing complex environmental impacts due to economic activity in the modern age. These impacts have been defined in various forms with climate change traditionally taking the limelight. However, it is increasingly recognized that for a meaningful shift towards a sustainable biosphere, actions must move beyond adaptation and mitigation of climate change. Broadening the problem definition to a 'twin crises' of climate change and biodiversity/nature loss, or a 'triple planetary crisis' including pollution, are such attempts move beyond a singular focus on climate change.

While the aim of net zero has clarified efforts to combat climate change, until recently, no comparable target existed for biodiversity loss or nature. Being 'nature-positive' is gaining traction as a separate but complimentary aim to net-zero, with a goal to halt and reverse the destruction of nature. While the evolving concept has a range of meanings as discussed below, the central thrust is the call for moving beyond limitation of damage to an economic and business model embedding recovery and regeneration of nature and people within it.

At CSF, we believe that discussing how Sri Lanka can chart a post-crisis recovery path towards a nature-positive economy is vital because;

- Sri Lanka is at a juncture where a re-imagination of our economic growth path is essential to face both economic and environmental challenges in the short to medium term horizon
- Nature-positivity calls for a holistic aspiration to embed nature in economic activity
- Nature-positivity can both combat and fall prey to 'green-washing', so discussing and clarifying such aims rooted in the local context is vital.

Types of 'nature positive' definitions

The broad range of definitions can be categorized into three types; conceptual, target-based, and process-based.

Type	Description	Example
Conceptual	Aspirational, often referring to slower mindset change	A nature-positive approach puts nature and biodiversity gain at the heart of decision-making and design. It goes beyond reducing and mitigating negative impacts on nature as it is a proactive and restorative approach focused on conservation, regeneration, and growth.
Target-based	Specific, aiming for quantifiable outcomes	Zero Net Loss of Nature from 2020, Net Positive by 2030, and Full Recovery by 2050.
Process-based	Operational steps required to achieve nature positive	A new way for businesses to operate, based on a better understanding of their exposure to risks and dependencies, involving conservation, avoidance, regeneration, and recovery of nature.

Source: [What Is Nature Positive? | Cutter Consortium](#)

[A systematic review of definitions in 2021](#) finds four key elements which are common in definitions of nature-positive business models;

- a) Scope: demonstrating positive biodiversity outcomes across the entire value chain
- b) Mainstreaming: buy-in throughout the entire organization
- c) Integration: integrated consideration of different components of nature (e.g., both biodiversity and climate)
- d) Ambition: measurable outcomes against a fixed baseline aligned with overall societal goals.

Examples of leading definitions for ‘nature-positive’

The table below includes some of the more prominent definitions associated with the phrase.

Organization	Definition
Nature Positive Initiative	<p>Nature Positive is a global societal goal defined as ‘Halt and Reverse Nature Loss by 2030 on a 2020 baseline, and achieve full recovery by 2050’. To put this more simply, it means ensuring more nature in the world in 2030 than in 2020 and continued recovery after that.</p> <p>Measuring Nature positivity: They are retaining and restoring 1) species, 2) ecosystems, and 3) natural processes at all scales (global, national and landscape level).</p>
EU’s Business and Biodiversity Platform	<p>The core principles of nature-nature positive actions are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nature positive is a collective effort 2. The full scope of nature needs to be covered 3. Material impacts of the value and within the spheres of influence need to be covered 4. Positive impacts need to outweigh negative impacts 5. Nature positive needs to be implemented in full compliance with the mitigation hierarchy and complemented by conservation measures 6. Targets and actions should be ambitious, science-based and integrated, and measured 7. Potential need for transformation of production processes or business models 8. The nature positive ambition needs to be endorsed by the Board 9. Nature positive requires immediate actions 10. Communicate in full transparency.
IUCN	<p>10 core principles of being nature positive; Nature as a whole, Avoid and mitigate, Holistic Actions, aligned with global goals, Mainstreaming, Collaborative, Adaptive, Transparent, Just, Measurable.</p> <p>These principles must be embedded in business action to assess, commit, transform and disclose business models.</p>
WEF	<p>A nature positive approach enriches biodiversity, stores carbon, purifies water and reduces pandemic risk. In short, a nature positive approach enhances the resilience of our planet and our societies.</p> <p>At its heart, the goal is to halt and reverse the destruction of nature by 2030 with a full recovery of a resilient biosphere by 2050.</p>
Global Nature Positive Initiative at WWF	<p>Nature-positive is defined as halting and reversing nature loss, measured from 2020 levels, by increasing the health, abundance, diversity, and resilience of species, populations, and ecosystems so that by 2030 nature is visibly and measurably on the path of recovery.</p>
Conservation International	<p>Nature-positive economies are good for people, climate and nature. They help conserve and restore the many benefits that ecosystems provide, while enabling sustainable development for local communities.</p>