

# Nature 2025

A Strategy for UNEP-WCMC

Consultation Draft, June 2021

Nature is in crisis. The loss and degradation of biodiversity is undermining progress towards a sustainable future for people and is major cause of climate change. The strategy we present here is our response to this crisis as we work towards a positive vision of a world living in harmony with nature.

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Underpinning our strategy is the principle that the Sustainable Development Goals can only be achieved if we reverse the loss of biodiversity. Healthy, resilient societies and economies depend fundamentally on healthy, resilient nature.

Reversing this trend of loss and putting the world on a pathway towards a sustainable, nature-positive future is our goal. It will require transformative changes across sectors and society in financial systems, patterns of consumption and production and other behaviours in order to reduce the pressures on biodiversity from changes in land and sea use; direct exploitation; climate change; pollution; and the spread of invasive alien species. It requires that we both scale up existing efforts and are also innovative in bringing new approaches for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

For over 40 years, UNEP-WCMC has provided the world with trusted science, knowledge, data and policy advice on nature, always with a focus on finding solutions to crisis facing nature. During this time there have been some notable successes. Our work under Protected Planet has helped bring increased areas of land and sea under protected area status. Our work on wildlife trade has informed policy and laws that have helped to secure a future for exploited species and communities that depend on them.

Our work at the interface between biodiversity and climate science has helped to drive a common response to the nature and climate crises; and our work with business and the finance sector has helped to understand the relevance of biodiversity loss for society and the economy, and driven action towards a nature-positive world.

UNEP-WCMC will continue and strengthen our work to bring innovative approaches to understand trends and scale up solutions for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of nature. We will work in partnership to bring the best-available data, knowledge and digital innovation in support of policy and practice across public and private sectors for the benefit of people and nature.

Delivering on the strategy will provide UNEP-WCMC's contribution to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy and Programmes of Work, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

## A focus on impact

The theory of change underpinning this strategy (see Figure A), connects our flagship initiatives (activities and outputs) to the change we seek through outcomes and long-term impacts.

Our four mutually dependent impact areas are (see Figure B):

- **Nature Conserved:** resilient, connected ecosystems and their species are conserved, sustaining all life on Earth.
- **Nature Restored:** degraded lands, inland waters and the ocean are restored for the benefit of people and nature.
- **Nature Based-Solutions:** public and private sectors make effective use of nature to address sustainable development challenges.
- **Nature Economy:** the world transitions to a nature-positive global economy.

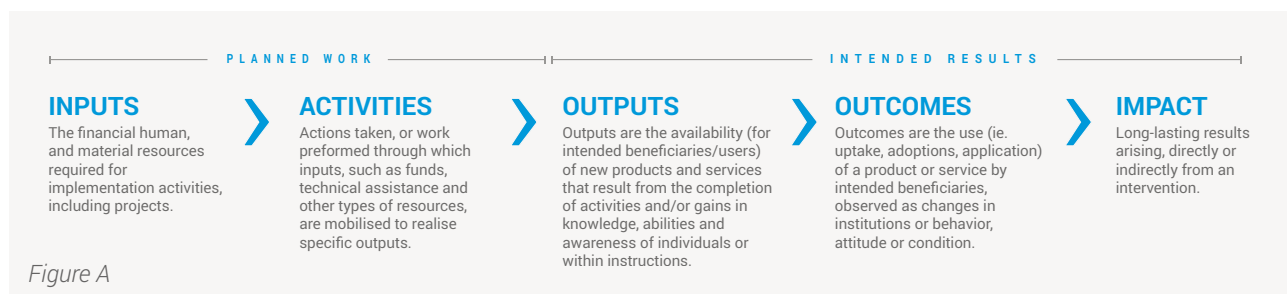


Figure A



Figure B

These impact areas are complemented by three cross-cutting innovation areas:

- **Science**
- **Policy**
- **Digital transformation**

Each impact and innovation area will have a set of flagship initiatives – project portfolios designed to contribute to the outcomes as shown in Figure C. It is anticipated that the set of flagship initiatives will further develop over the course of the strategy.

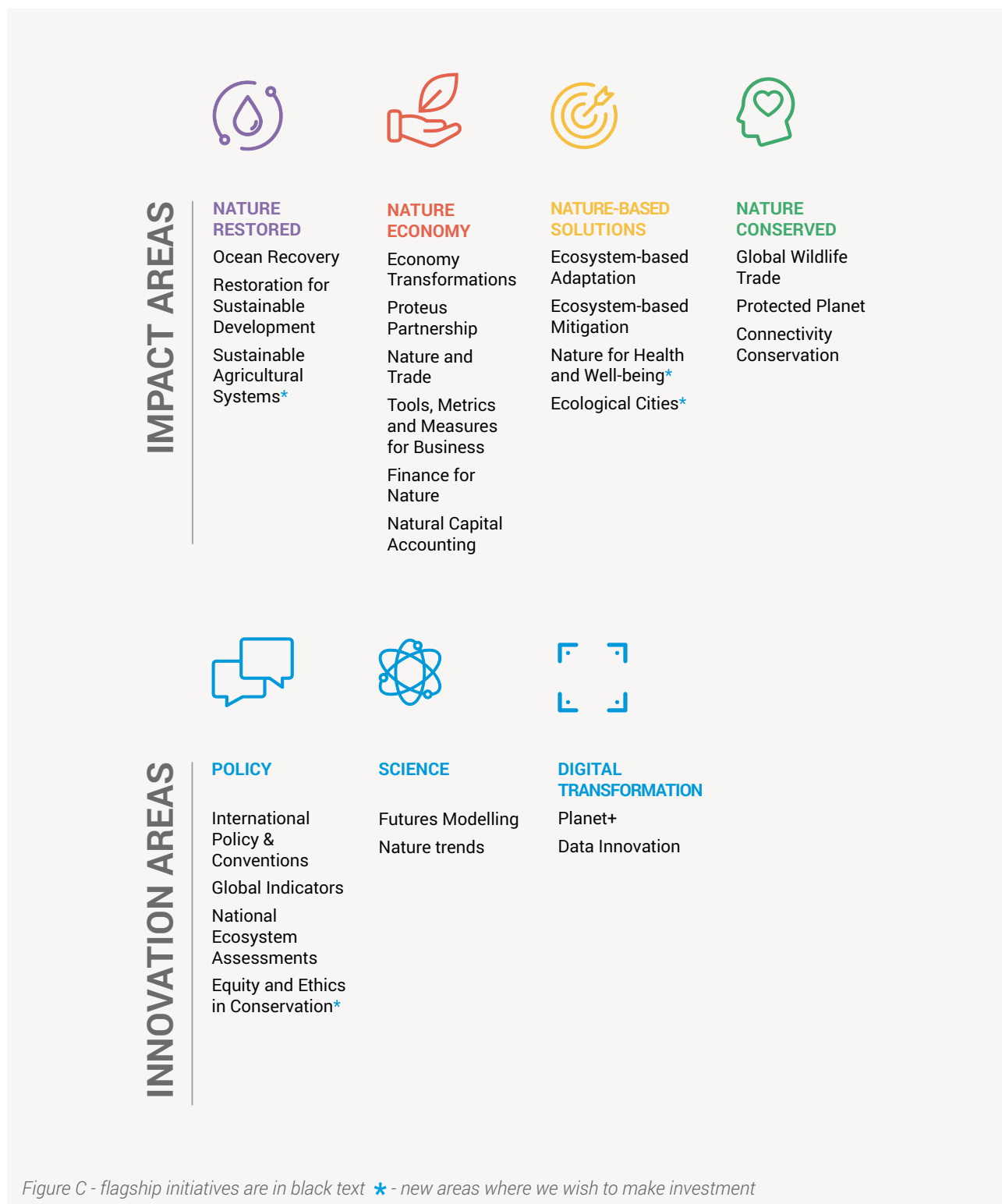


Figure C - flagship initiatives are in black text \* - new areas where we wish to make investment

## Outcomes by 2025

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Under each of the four impact areas we have developed a set of outcomes which express how we aim for the world to look in 2025 after we have implemented our planned work under this strategy.

### Nature Conserved

#### Outcome 1

Legal, policy and planning frameworks for area-based conservation and species conservation are in place and being effectively implemented, scaling up progress towards area-based, connectivity and species conservation targets.

#### Outcome 2

Governments are equipped with the evidence, tools and knowledge they need to assess and improve the sustainability of international wildlife trade, and these are used by decision-makers to improve outcomes for species and ecosystems.

#### Outcome 3

Knowledge on the state of biodiversity and its threats is available and is driving decision making across sectors to improve outcomes for nature.

### Nature Restored

#### Outcome 1

The global community is supported via legal, policy and planning frameworks, to scale-up efficient restoration action so global restoration goals can be achieved.

#### Outcome 2

An accessible knowledge base is available allowing planners and practitioners to prioritise effective restoration efforts that deliver measurable, long term environmental, social and economic benefits.

#### Outcome 3

A monitoring framework is in place to track and incentivise effective global restoration efforts and enhance adaptive management.

### Nature-based solutions

#### Outcome 1

The benefits of Nature-based Solutions for multiple societal challenges are widely understood and valued in public and private sectors.

#### Outcome 2

Tools and knowledge required to implement resilient Nature-based Solutions successfully and monitor their results are improved, available and well-used.

#### Outcome 3

Legal, policy and planning frameworks are in place to enable the effective implementation of Nature-based Solutions.

### Nature Economy

#### Outcome 1

Economic actors have the knowledge, tools and capacity to measure and account for their impacts and dependencies on natural capital and so they can implement nature-positive actions.

#### Outcome 2

Legal, policy, planning and accountability frameworks are reformed to enable nature-positive and carbon-neutral outcomes.

#### Outcome 3

Financial flows incentivise nature-positive and carbon-neutral outcomes.

## One Organisation working

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Delivery of the strategy will be guided by the principle of One Organisation working, whereby the four impact areas and three innovation areas will drive collective action towards the 2050 vision. We will embrace the multiple relationships and blurred boundaries between

these areas. We will embrace a culture of innovation and a sharp focus on creating real, lasting and positive change for nature and people. We will also continually build the capacity and skills of our staff and our partners through training, events and knowledge sharing.

## Our partners

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We work with a range of partners from national and sub-national governments, businesses, UN, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, research institutions and communities.

This strategy will be delivered through such partnerships. Our aim is for this strategy to be used to provide direction and purpose to all the work we do and to help explain this clearly to current and prospective partners.

## Our foundations

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In taking forward this strategy we recognise we are dependent on strong organisational and operational foundations. In particular, over the period of the strategy we will invest in:

- Recruiting and retaining leading talent
- Growing and diversifying our sources of funding
- Excellence in operations and financial management
- Strengthening our regional engagement
- High impact, compelling communications

Alongside this strategy, an Impact Measurement Framework will enable us to track and report progress on our identified flagship initiatives, outcomes and impact areas in addition to organisational Key Performance Indicators.

## Flagship Initiatives

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Under the three innovation areas and four impact areas we will focus on a number of flagship initiatives. These are portfolios of projects with a particular focus and have been chosen for a combination of their impact-value and alignment with our organisational niche, skills, knowledge and expertise.

Nature Conserved	
Global Wildlife Trade	We will support efforts to regulate the international trade in wildlife for the benefit of nature and sustainable use by people. This will include providing dedicated scientific, policy and knowledge management support to global efforts to implement CITES, as well as regional initiatives in the EU and elsewhere working to minimise the threats to animal and plant species (including timber) posed by direct trade and use.
Protected Planet	We will maintain and develop the Protected Planet Initiative as the global platform for knowledge and data on the status and trends of protected areas. By providing policy-makers with the best possible information on protected areas, it will support monitoring progress towards global targets, build capacity for improved conservation planning, deliver better decision-making for nature and people, and enhance conservation outcomes on land and in the world's Oceans.
Connectivity Conservation	We will support international efforts to conserve migratory species and to promote ecological connectivity by bringing knowledge and experience to bear on connectivity conservation across terrestrial, marine and freshwater systems around the world. This includes supporting the implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species (and the wider CMS Family), the Convention on Biological Diversity and the proposed international legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, to conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Nature Restored	
Ocean Recovery	We will support processes to secure improved national and international governance of oceans, enabling scaled-up restoration that delivers sustainable blue economies all around the world. We will help the world to understand, prioritise and monitor how and what to restore in key ocean habitats.
Restoration for Sustainable Development	We will support efforts to restore ecosystems and species as a key action required to halt and reverse global biodiversity loss. This will involve supporting policy, planning, implementation and monitoring processes to achieve multiple benefits from restoration thereby delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals. We will collate and use the evidence base to make a strong case for restoration, to inform planning and prioritisation of effective restoration across ecosystems, and to deliver restoration that works for all.
Sustainable Agricultural Systems	We will transform currently unsustainable agricultural systems by providing data, knowledge, analysis and solutions on nature-positive, regenerative models of food production within agricultural ecosystems, including improving policy coherence relating to land-use and marine spatial planning.

Nature Based-Solutions	
Ecosystem-based Adaptation	We will undertake science-based awareness raising and support to decision makers and practitioners on the role of ecosystems in adaptation and resilience to climate change. This will include the identification and prioritisation of ecosystem assets and options for adaptation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of NbS for both climate change adaptation and a range of other societal benefits (nature's contributions to people) that also generate nature-positive outcomes.
Ecosystem-based Mitigation	We will undertake science-based awareness raising and support to decision makers and practitioners on the vital role ecosystem protection, restoration and sustainable use has in mitigating climate change. We will focus on developing natural climate solutions which are also nature-positive and deliver a range of other societal benefits.
Nature for Health and Well-being	We will strengthen the evidence base about how human health and well-being is dependent upon and linked to the health of nature. This will involve exploring the sometimes complex relationships between nature and people and proposing clearer paths and choices for decision making, focusing on the One Health approach in particular. This area of work is in the early stages of development and is partly linked to COVID-19 recovery plans and efforts to 'build back better'.
Ecological Cities	We will use our expertise, data and knowledge to advance the transformation of cities towards a nature-positive future through provide cutting-edge analysis, knowledge-syntheses and data on biodiversity and natural capital. We will do this by working with partners within and beyond cities to enable more informed decision making and planning by city authorities, national government and other actors includes NGOs and communities.

Nature Economy	
Economy Transformations	We will work with companies and finance bodies including banks to create an enabling environment for nature-positive outcomes. This work will include the whole economy, blue economy, green economy, and the creation and dissemination of data, knowledge, platforms and tools to assist transformational change
Proteus Partnership	We will support private sector decision making towards nature-positive outcomes so that business are empowered to contribute to a clean, healthy, resilient environment for all.
Nature and Trade	We will identify leverage points to shift global supply chains, particularly of commodities, towards nature-positive outcomes. The work will address high impact commodities, highly impacted land/sea scapes and influential actors at pinch points and clusters. Areas of work will encompass trade between nations, and associated trade rule regimes, and trade facilitated by the corporate sector for specific commodities.
Tools, Metrics and Measures for Business	We will work to overcome the barriers related to measuring performance by businesses seeking to address their impacts on biodiversity, including setting science based targets, aligned metrics, business-relevant indicators, and through access to reliable decision-grade data.
Finance for Nature	We will help change the business case for action on biodiversity loss by addressing unsustainable short-term financial behaviours which incentivise the depletion of natural capital. We will mobilise financing for nature-positive outcomes through tools such as ENCORE and our work on land-use finance
Natural Capital Accounting	We will provide tools, advice and expertise to overcome the barriers to the widespread adoption of a natural capital accounting approaches at national, subnational levels and within the private sector. We will create synergies between our work on natural capital accounting with our science-based mapping and modelling work, particularly in relation to nature's contributions to people

Science	
Futures Modelling	We will use scientific innovation and our position at the forefront of global research to develop scenarios and map pathways for sustainable futures and societal transformation. We will continue to integrate data products with a growing body of biodiversity knowledge.
Nature trends	We will use leading-edge knowledge and data, including remote sensing and other advanced data analyses to improve our understanding of biodiversity baselines (state, pressure, response), develop powerful indicators of changes in biodiversity, natural capital and nature's contributions to people over time, and assess the relative successes of conservation actions.

Policy	
International Policy & Conventions	We will support intergovernmental conventions and processes to identify opportunities for increased cooperation and synergies. This will include supporting delivery of the UN Common Approach to Biodiversity, implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and multiple other conventions and UN processes.
Global Indicators	We will support intergovernmental processes in developing and using biodiversity indicators, promote their use at national level. We will continue to convene the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. Indicators for use by business and finance sectors will also be developed, collated and organised to deliver impact on the business sector.
National Ecosystem Assessments	We will support to national governments in developing and implementing national ecosystem assessments that meet their policy needs.
Equity and Ethics in Conservation	We will use social science approaches and insights across all our work and will seek to collaborate with actors inside and outside the conservation sector to ensure that equitable and ethical approaches to conservation policy, governance and practice become the norm. We will pay particular focus to the rights and the critical roles of women and girls, indigenous peoples and local communities, youth and intergenerational partnerships.

Digital transformation	
Planet+	We will provide leadership and convening capacity towards a digital transformation in the way data and knowledge on nature is collected, analysed, accessed and used. We will also link this to sector-specific needs to ensure evidence-based, rapid and impactful decisions are being made for nature and people.
Data Innovation	We will develop workflows and data pipelines to ensure the timely delivery of data and insights that assist decision-making at different scales

