

Navigating the target setting landscape

Comparison of existing and emerging approaches

Key Messages

- Several approaches are available, and in development, to guide companies to set nature-related targets. Different approaches have different purposes and scope, from addressing site-based impacts, to reducing pressures on nature across a company's direct operations and supply chains or aligning business actions with global policy goals for nature. They also differ in their coverage of biodiversity.
- This Technical Brief reviews the similarities and differences between four prominent target setting approaches:
 - No Net Loss and Net Positive Impact (NNL and NPI) targets, which relate to the state of biodiversity at development sites.
 - Science Based Targets Network (SBTN) targets, which focus on reducing pressures and taking action.
 - The draft IUCN 'Measuring Nature-Positive' approach, which guides companies to set targets for reducing pressures based on their contributions to global species extinction risk.
 - The Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) guidance on nature-related target setting, noting this is not a method but broad guidance on the different types of nature-related targets that companies can set.
- The different approaches to setting targets do not have to be mutually exclusive. Companies can follow different approaches to set targets encompassing both pressures on biodiversity and the state of biodiversity itself, at different scales.
- When setting targets, companies should consider what changes in pressures and the state of nature they can achieve, through ambitious actions both by the company individually and by working collectively with other stakeholders and organisations.



A landscape in Washington, United States of America, that could be transformed for biodiversity.
Photo by Peter Robbins on Unsplash.

Introduction to corporate biodiversity target setting

Target setting is an important mechanism for supporting companies as they take action to halt biodiversity loss and restore nature.

Target setting has a role to play in catalyzing action by the private sector towards achieving global policy goals for nature. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework sets the global ambition to live in harmony with nature by 2050. The Global Biodiversity Framework sets out 23 Targets to be met at a global scale by 2030. For example, Target 3 focuses on conserving 30% of land, waters and sea. Target 4 outlines the ambition to halt species extinction, protect genetic diversity and manage human-wildlife conflicts. Target 10 focuses on enhancing biodiversity and sustainability in agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry. Target 15 focuses on businesses assessing, disclosing and reducing biodiversity related risks and negative impacts. Many countries are in the process of revising and updating their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), which set out each country's plans to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity, by aligning their national measures and targets with the Targets and Goals of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Companies can familiarize themselves with these and set corporate targets for nature aligned with NBSAPs and the Global Biodiversity Framework, to ensure that their actions contribute to the achievement of national and global objectives.

There are several guidance documents and methodologies available to support companies with setting targets on nature. For example, SBTN alongside TNFD disclosure recommendations align with Target 15, IUCN Nature Positive approach and NNL/NPI support companies to set targets addressing species extinction risk, aligning with Target 4. Many technical aspects of these guidance documents and methodologies are complementary, but there are also differences. It is therefore important that companies understand the purpose for which they are setting targets and select the appropriate guidance or methodology to follow based on this. To help companies with the process, this Technical Brief provides an overview of how biodiversity is included in existing and emerging corporate target setting approaches. The four approaches were selected due to their relevance to a range of sectors. They include: No Net Loss and Net Positive Impact (several guidance documents available), [Science Based Targets Network \(SBTN\)](#), [IUCN Measuring Nature-Positive \(V1.0 consultation draft\)](#), and the guidance provided in the [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures \(TNFD\) LEAP approach](#). There are other methodologies and guidance documents available for companies to set targets, such as guidance referenced in the TNFD sector specific guidance, which are not covered in this Brief due to the lack of focus on biodiversity or narrow applicability to different sectors. It is important to note that the four target setting approaches are not mutually exclusive and companies can use each methodology to address different specific needs.

The approaches in place to set targets for nature are similar to those that are in place to guide target setting for climate. The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) provides guidance for science-based targets for climate and the TNFD mirrors the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). These climate target setting approaches align with the Paris Agreement, the international treaty on climate change.

Once companies have set targets for nature, they should report regularly on progress. Guidance on disclosure of targets and progress against these is provided by relevant disclosure frameworks and standards, such as the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) and [TNFD](#). This brief does not cover disclosure of targets, rather the comparison focuses on the target setting methodologies. Table 1 provides a summary of the different target setting approaches reviewed. The rest of the brief provides a comparison of technical aspects of the target setting approaches including the purpose, types of targets, way in which biodiversity is considered, scale of targets, how they consider contributions of multiple actors and how baselines are set and progress measured against them.

Table 1. Summary of the target setting approaches covered in this brief.

Target setting approach	Summary	Maturity	Sectoral relevance	Realm	Target level
No Net Loss and Net Positive Impact/Net Gain goals	<p>No Net Loss (NNL) refers to an approach for setting targets on reducing the negative impacts to biodiversity caused by a development project, so that any negative impacts are balanced by the compensation measures that a project undertakes. Net Positive Impact (NPI), or net gain, goes one step further than NNL; NPI is “a target for project outcomes in which the impacts on biodiversity (i.e. the variety of ecosystems and living things) caused by the project are outweighed by the actions taken to avoid and reduce such impacts, rehabilitate affected species/landscapes and offset any residual impacts.” (IUCN 2015).</p> <p>The two terms NNL and NPI are sometimes used side-by-side, although they are quantitatively different and NPI can represent a higher level of ambition. NNL and NPI are grounded in the mitigation hierarchy, where companies first prioritise avoiding any impact to biodiversity, second minimise unavoidable impacts, third rehabilitate ecosystems, and as a last resort offset any remaining negative impacts to biodiversity.</p> <p>There is not a single NNL and NPI methodology, instead several guidance documents exist. These include the Cross Sector Biodiversity Initiative Mitigation Hierarchy guidance and specific aspects explored in IUCN Net Positive Impact on biodiversity and the IUCN report exploring the application to agriculture and forestry sectors.</p>	No Net Loss and Net Positive Impact goals are a well-established concept. Companies have been setting No Net Loss (NNL) and Net Positive Impact (NPI) biodiversity commitments since 2001. ¹	<p>NNL and NPI are most commonly applied to site-based impacts from development projects, e.g. built infrastructure, energy and mining sectors. NNL and NPI goals have also been set by the manufacturing sector² and the potential to apply to forestry and agriculture has been explored.³</p> <p>NNL and NPI are included within the International Finance Corporation Performance Standard 6 (IFC PS6) and commitments by industry bodies such as the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM). The IFC PS6 has been widely picked up as best practice across the built infrastructure, mining and energy sectors. It sets out a requirement for NNL in natural habitats and net gain (equivalent to NPI) in Critical Habitats. In addition, ICMM refers to NNL and net gain within the direct operation commitment in the ICMM Nature: Position Statement.</p>	Primarily applied to the terrestrial realm, with work exploring the principles of marine net gain underway.	Site Landscapes

¹ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/bse.2379>

² <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/bse.2379>

³ <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2015-003.pdf>

<p>Science Based Targets Network</p>	<p>SBTN provides methodologies for corporates to set measurable, actionable and time-bound targets. The methods include five steps guiding companies to set science-based targets tailored to their material pressures for the land, freshwater, climate, and ocean realms, in their direct operations and value chains.</p>	<p>Guidance is available for assessing pressures and the state of nature in Step 1, prioritising sites to take action in Step 2 and setting targets for freshwater and land realms in Step 3. Future versions of these methods can be expected in 2025 and beyond. Guidance for Step 3: Ocean is currently in draft form and version 1 is expected to be released in 2025, and Step 4: Act and 5: Track are also in development.</p> <p>The first companies to adopt science-based targets for nature were announced in October 2024.⁴</p>	<p>SBTN is relevant to a range of sectors. Step 1 and 2 focuses on screening a company's direct operations and value chains by assessing the pressures and state of nature before prioritising these locations for target setting. These two steps can be applied by all sectors. While applicable across all sectors, some of the targets for the freshwater and land realms have a particular relevance to companies in the Forestry, Land and Agriculture sectors.</p>	<p>Targets are set per realm, and companies can set two targets for the freshwater realm on freshwater quantity and freshwater quality. For the terrestrial realm there are three targets; no conversion of natural ecosystems (Target 1), land footprint reduction (Target 2), and landscape engagement (Target 3). Step 3 guidance for the ocean realm is expected to be released in 2025.</p>	<p>Site Landscapes Upstream value chain Corporate level</p>
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⁴ <https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/news/news/first-companies-publicly-adopting-sbts-for-nature/>

<p>IUCN Measuring Nature Positive</p>	<p>The IUCN Measuring Nature-Positive Consultation Draft (hereafter referred to as IUCN Nature Positive approach) guides users to set and implement targets to reduce pressures on species and ecosystems, using the Species Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR) metric and an ecosystem extent and condition metric.⁵ The IUCN Nature Positive approach guides companies to assess the current STAR scores in an area where it operates, or its value chain operates, and set targets for threat abatement and restoration in the area. The methodology used by companies depends on whether companies are setting targets for existing impacts, ongoing impacts, or new impacts.</p>	<p>The Version 1 draft has undergone public consultation, and Version 2 is in development.⁶</p>	<p>The methods focus on using STAR and an ecosystem metric to set targets to reduce pressures. Due to the wide applicability of STAR and the methods covering impacts at a site, supply chain and within a financial portfolio, the methods are applicable to range of sectors within the terrestrial realm.</p>	<p>Currently applicable to terrestrial realm due to the use of terrestrial STAR.</p>	<p>Site Landscapes Upstream value chain Financial portfolio</p>
<p>Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures</p>	<p>The TNFD provides disclosure recommendations and guidance to help organisations report and take action on nature-related issues. The TNFD recommends that companies look to SBTN to set science-based targets for nature and also provides sector-specific guidance that signposts towards other sector-specific target setting guidance.</p>	<p>Version 1 of the LEAP approach was released in September 2023.</p>	<p>Not specified as the TNFD does not have its own target setting methodology.</p>	<p>Not specified as the TNFD does not have its own target setting methodology.</p>	<p>Site Product Landscapes Value chain Corporate level</p>

⁵ IUCN is in the process of selecting an ecosystem extent and condition metric, therefore assessing ecosystems is not currently included in the methodology.

⁶ <https://engage.iucn.org/discussion/iucn-consultation-measuring-nature-positive-setting-and-implementing-verified-robust>

Comparison of the four target setting approaches

In this section we compare key aspects of the four target setting approaches. The first three sections focus on the purpose of each target setting approach, the types of targets set and the way in which the biodiversity outcomes are considered. The following sections focus on whether targets are set at the site, corporate or value chain level, how they consider contributions of multiple actors, and how baselines are used to track progress towards biodiversity goals.

1. Purpose of the approaches

The four target setting approaches covered in this brief have been designed for different purposes.

The NNL and NPI approach is commonly used by companies with site-based impacts in the built infrastructure, energy and mining sectors. Companies setting NNL and NPI goals aim to balance or improve the state of biodiversity where development projects take place. There is no single NNL and NPI methodology, instead several guidance documents exist. The guidance for NNL and NPI is not prescriptive, and the targets do not get validated by an external organization. Instead, the guidance provides overarching principles that can be adapted to local contexts.

SBTN's target setting methodology was specifically designed to guide companies in setting science-based targets to reduce pressures to align with global limits and societal goals. Passing these tipping points, also referred to as planetary boundaries, will lead to irreversible environmental changes.⁷ The SBTN methods are prescriptive, with validation criteria set out to allow the target to be validated against the SBTN methodology.

The aim of the IUCN Nature Positive approach is for companies to set targets for positive outcomes for species and ecosystems that align with the goals of the Global Biodiversity Framework and nature-positive societal ambition. The approach aims to promote reduction of species extinction risk and the risk of ecosystem collapse. The draft guidance highlights the need for contributions towards global goals for nature to be verifiable and robust. Therefore, the methods set out are prescriptive and require the use of specific metrics. However, the targets that are set are not validated by a third party.

TNFD provides guidance on assessing nature-related issues, the 'LEAP' approach. This includes principles for setting targets that are relevant to all sectors and geographies, for example considering impact and dependency pathways and the principles to select metrics to monitor and report progress. TNFD is not a standard setter and has not produced a target setting methodology, so its purpose is not to set out prescriptive steps to follow. Instead, TNFD recommends that companies refer to the SBTN methodology for further guidance on setting targets at site- and landscape-level and reducing pressures.⁸

⁷ <https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/about/what-are-sbts/>

⁸ https://tnfd.global/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Guidance_for_corporates_on_science_based_targets_for_nature_v1.pdf?v=1695138398

2. Types of targets

Companies can set different types of nature-related targets. TNFD differentiates between three categories of target, shown in Figure 1.

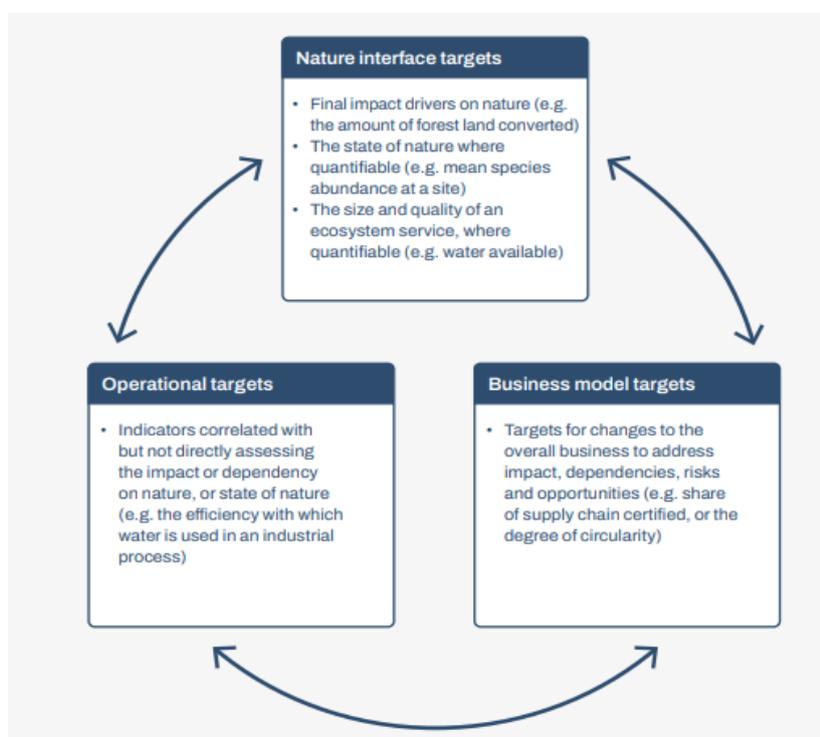


Figure 1: Categories of targets set out in the TNFD LEAP approach with illustrative examples. Taken from TNFD (2023) Guidance on the identification and assessment of nature related issues: The LEAP approach.

Nature interface targets focus directly on improving the state of biodiversity or nature, the quality of ecosystem services, or focus on reducing the pressures to biodiversity.

State-based targets and pressure-based targets share the overall ambition to improve the state of nature, however, differ in what they measure (Box 1).

Box 1: Definition of state-focused targets, pressure-focused targets and ecosystem service targets.

Setting targets on state	Setting targets on pressures	Setting targets on the stock and flow of ecosystem services
<p>State-based targets are based explicitly on the intended outcome for nature. This can include changes in species population size and extinction risk, or ecosystem condition and extent.</p> <p>Changes to the state of nature can result from factors under a companies' direct control or external factors.</p>	<p>Pressure-based targets aim to reduce the direct drivers of biodiversity loss that are defined by IPBES as land and sea use change, resource exploitation, climate change, pollution and invasive species. The pressures exerted through the company or its business relationships tend to be under the company's direct control or influence.</p>	<p>Targets to improve the stock and flow of ecosystem services (or nature's contributions to people) which the company, or other people/organizations, depend upon. Currently, dependencies are not comprehensively integrated into most target setting approaches.</p>

SBTN, IUCN Nature Positive, TNFD and NNL and NPI each provide a framework to set different types of targets. Table 2 below provides a comparison of how the four approaches covered in this report differ with regards to the type of target they focus on.

Table 2: Types of targets covered in the four approaches.

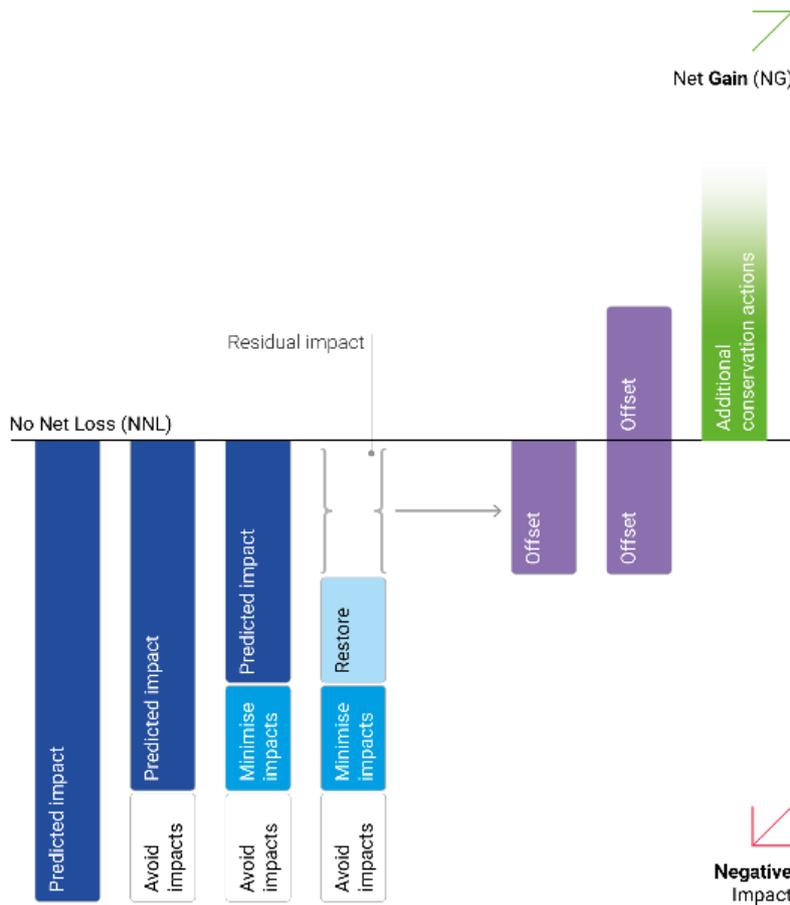
Approach	Type of target			
	Business model targets	Operational targets	Nature interface targets	
			State-based targets	Pressure-based targets
NNL and NPI			X	
SBTN	Partly	Partly		X – some pressure-based targets integrate aspects of the state of nature
IUCN Nature Positive				X – based on the state
TNFD ⁹	X	X	X	X

The NNL and NPI approach allows businesses to set targets for sites, based on outcomes for the state of biodiversity. The NNL and NPI approach is based on companies setting a goal to have “no net reduction in the diversity within and among species and vegetation types; long-term viability of species and vegetation types; and, functioning of species assemblages and ecosystems, including ecological and evolutionary processes” (IUCN 2015). Available [NNL and NPI guidance](#) includes recommendations to ensure credibility, including the need to follow the mitigation hierarchy (see Box 2).

⁹ TNFD provides principles for setting targets and is not a target setting methodology.

Box 2: The Mitigation Hierarchy.

The mitigation hierarchy guides companies and investors to manage biodiversity risk, by first avoiding any impact to biodiversity, second minimising unavoidable impacts, third rehabilitating ecosystems and as a last resort offsetting any negative impacts to biodiversity.



CSBI (2015). A cross-sector guide for implementing the mitigation hierarchy. Available [here](#).

SBTN provides guidance on how businesses can set targets to reduce pressures and take action, aligned to Earth’s limits and societal sustainability goals. Step 1 and 2 of the SBTN methods outline how companies should prioritize between sites and pressures on what targets they should set first. In Step 3, companies are guided to set targets for land and freshwater realms, with guidance for the ocean realm scheduled for release in 2025. The SBTN Step 3 guidance provides methodologies for setting eight types of targets listed in Table 3 below. Future versions and iterations of these targets can be expected in future releases. Companies are also encouraged to set other types of targets applying the general principles within the SBTN guidance, but these will not be eligible for validation by the SBTN target validation service.

Table 3: Types of targets covered in the SBTN methods (as of December 2024).

Targets in Step 3: Land	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No conversion of natural ecosystems 2. Land footprint reduction 3. Landscape engagement
Targets in Step 3: Freshwater	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Freshwater quantity 2. Freshwater quality
Targets in Step 3: Oceans (draft)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoid and reduce overexploitation (for fisheries) 2. Protect structural habitats (marine) 3. Reduce risk to endangered, threatened and protected marine wildlife populations

The draft IUCN Nature Positive Approach guides companies to set targets for threat level reduction and biodiversity gains by encouraging them to take actions that address pressures contributing to global species extinction risk. Therefore, the target focuses on pressure reduction based on biodiversity state. The methodology is still in development and the current methodology only focuses on setting STAR targets (Box 3). In the future, it is expected that the methodology will also include an ecosystem extent and condition metric. However, this metric has not yet been determined by IUCN.¹⁰ The STAR score is influenced by the threats to species in the area, including from company activities. STAR scores show how important an area is based on the vulnerability of species within the area and how irreplaceable that habitat is for the species. In the IUCN Nature Positive Approach, targets are set depending on whether a company is accounting for historic impacts to nature, reducing their existing impact or reducing new impacts. The methodology differs for each of these scenarios, but the general steps are to calculate the STAR-t scores for the area, then look at the STAR-r score for threats relevant to the sector. For existing impacts, STAR-r is also used to identify areas to restore nature. Companies then determine the management practices that will reduce the companies' pressure on biodiversity. The STAR target is then determined, considering the current and historical impacts and management practices.

Box 3: The Species Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR) metric.

There are two STAR metrics, STAR-t threat abatement and STAR-r restoration. STAR-t shows areas that are currently important for species, so reducing threats in the area would contribute to reducing species extinction risk. The area could have a high number of threatened species and a large proportion of these species' ranges. STAR-r shows areas where restoration could make a considerable contribution to reduce extinction risk as the area previously had a high number of threatened species or a large proportion of these species' ranges.

TNFD recommends that organizations decide whether to set nature-interface targets to address nature directly, or to indirectly address nature by setting business model targets or operational targets. Nature interface targets can focus on impact drivers or the state of nature. Both the business model and operational targets aim to drive changes to benefit nature. However, these may not directly involve the measurement of impact drivers, ecosystem services and/or the state of nature. The business model targets aim to drive change in the business to address impacts, dependencies, risks and opportunities. For example certified sourcing, and operational targets focus on company processes for example improving water efficiency.

¹⁰ Ideally species, ecosystems and genetic diversity would be captured. The guidance acknowledges that there are challenges with assessing genetic diversity.

3. Consideration of biodiversity

While all four target setting approaches aim to generate positive outcomes for biodiversity, the way biodiversity considerations inform the targets differs between the approaches.

In NNL and NPI goals, avoidance of net loss in biodiversity or improvement in the state of biodiversity is the main objective. Companies setting NNL and NPI goals will identify the components of biodiversity that are relevant to their target area (e.g. site, landscape etc). The guidance available does not specify the components of biodiversity that need to be considered or the metrics that ought to be used (like species populations or ecosystem extent). Instead, companies select these components and metrics by considering the local context. This has similarities to the SBTN landscape engagement target that allows for locally defined selection of metrics. The NNL and NPI target is then defined as a positive impact on the biodiversity values in the target area, to be achieved by following the mitigation hierarchy.¹¹ The IFC PS6 includes guidance on applying NNL and NPI, including setting out requirements for NNL in natural habitats and net gain (equivalent to NPI) in Critical Habitats. Many companies, including Proteus Partners, have also developed their own internal guidance on identifying key biodiversity features and applying NNL/NPI principles.

Companies following the SBTN methods are guided to set targets to reduce material pressures, such as land footprint or water pollution (see Table 3 above). The overarching approach follows the logic that reducing negative pressures on biodiversity will result in positive changes to the state of nature. In SBTN Steps 1 and 2, the estimated biodiversity state of nature and pressure-based state of nature are used to prioritize the locations and pressures for which companies should set targets first. In Step 3, some of the targets for pressure reduction are required to be set with consideration of the state of nature in locations (e.g. Land target 1: No Conversion of natural ecosystems requires companies to assess which sites overlap with natural ecosystems, Freshwater target 1: Freshwater quantity requires companies to use local or global hydrological models which include the amount of water required to maintain the ecological condition). However, not all targets are informed by biodiversity measurements, and not all dimensions of biodiversity are equally covered. For example, out of the 8 types of targets covered by the current SBTN Step 3 methods (see Table 3 above), the species diversity is optional to assess for Land target 3: Landscape engagement and data on endangered, threatened and protected species is required for Oceans target 3: Risk to marine wildlife. SBTN guidance on Step 4: Act and Step 5: Track, which are currently in development, are expected to include information on safeguards and monitoring of biodiversity and other considerations that companies will be recommended to apply as they take action to achieve their targets. This will build on SBTN's AR3T framework¹² aligned with the mitigation hierarchy.

Companies following the IUCN Nature Positive Approach are required to set targets to reduce specific pressures that threaten species in the area. Once companies have set the STAR target, they are guided to design interventions to meet the target. The STAR scores, alongside the lists of species and threats that contribute to these scores, can help inform interventions. Companies calibrate the STAR scores to ground truth the threats and determine the species present as well as considering aspects such as impacts on local communities and risk of leakage. This approach is therefore currently focused on species extinction risk as the state of nature variable, but future iterations of the guidance are expected to also include using ecosystem condition metrics and ecosystem-level assessments. This will be important for ensuring that interventions do not cause negative impacts to other aspects of biodiversity.

TNFD has a broader focus on enabling organizations to set targets in response to their overall dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities. The TNFD LEAP approach encourages companies to consider all aspects of biodiversity as part of the dependency, impact, risk and opportunity assessment. The guidance on setting targets within the LEAP approach implies that nature-related targets lead to improvements in biodiversity by strongly recommending that organizations align their targets with national and international policy objectives, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The

¹¹ <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2015-003.pdf>

¹² The SBTN AR3T framework sets out steps for company action. The steps are to Avoid and Reduce pressures, Regenerate and Restore nature and Transform systems. <https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/companies/take-action/act/>

business model and operational targets aim to drive location-based action for nature, however these may not directly involve measuring the state of nature.

4. Level of target: site, company and value chain

The target setting approaches vary in whether they cover site level, company level or value chain targets.

The TNFD provides high-level guidance on the level to set targets, recommending that targets are set at the level of the company that is most suitable to achieve the target. TNFD highlights that targets may be set for individual products, for sites, value chains or the entire organization. The level should be determined based on the aim of the target, and how much control or influence the company has to make changes to meet the target. The operational and business model targets that TNFD refers to are set at the company level as these apply to the whole business. The state and pressure-based nature interface targets are only company level if applied across all operations.

Some companies' most significant negative impacts will be present in the value chain, and for those companies the guidance on setting targets for specific sites or landscapes within the value chain, or the entire value chain will be most relevant.

Table 4: Level of targets covered in the four approaches.

Approach	Level of target covered			
	Site level	Landscape /regional level	Company level	Value chains
NNL and NPI	X	X	Partly	
SBTN	X	X	Partly	Partly
IUCN Nature Positive	X	X	Partly	Partly
TNFD ¹³	X	X	X	X

The NNL and NPI approach can be applied to projects and operations of a company and scaled to the landscape level. NNL and NPI commitments can also be applied at the corporate level, with the goal to have an overall net positive impact across all operations. However, it is more appropriate to measure the net positive impact at each site rather than the company as a whole, as nature is non-fungible. Therefore, the NNL and NPI approach is predominantly applied and best suited to direct operations but can be scaled to cover all sites.

In SBTN, the scale that targets are set varies depending on the target. Some targets are set at the site or basin level, for example the freshwater targets. In contrast some targets encompass all impacts in the company's upstream value chain e.g. reducing the agricultural land footprint from upstream impacts by X%. The draft ocean targets currently focus on specific locations within the direct operations or upstream, so multiple targets will need to be set to encompass a company's entire upstream value chain. The level that targets are set in SBTN is shown in Table 5. While targets are initially set at prioritized locations, they should eventually be set for all locations where the pressure is material and eventually be applied across the company.

¹³ TNFD provides principles for setting targets and is not a target setting methodology.

Table 5: Level of target set in SBTN (as of December 2024).

SBTN Target		Location specific (e.g. basin, landscape, jurisdiction, seascape)	Company	Upstream value chain
Land	1. No conversion of natural ecosystems		X	X- entire value chain where there is traceability to at least sub-national level.
	2. Land footprint reduction		X	X- entire value chain
	3. Landscape engagement	X		X - specific sites in value chain
Freshwater	1. Freshwater quantity	X		X - specific sites in value chain
	2. Freshwater quality	X		X - specific sites in value chain
Ocean (draft)	1. Avoid and reduce overexploitation	X		X - specific sites in value chain
	2. Protect structural habitats	X		X - specific sites in value chain
	3. Reduce risk to endangered, threatened and protected marine wildlife populations	X		X - specific sites in value chain

The IUCN Nature Positive approach is scalable from sites to larger administrative areas. STAR scores can be calculated for small sites or larger areas across landscapes. When there is uncertainty in the location of a company’s operations or where commodities are sourced from, then STAR scores can be calculated for larger areas and weighted for uncertainty. The guidance also includes initial proposals for how companies can set targets for locations in the upstream value chain, where companies know the location of sourcing and where this is less certain. This makes the methodology relevant to sectors with site-based impacts, as well as impacts through its upstream value chain.

5. Contributions of different actors to targets

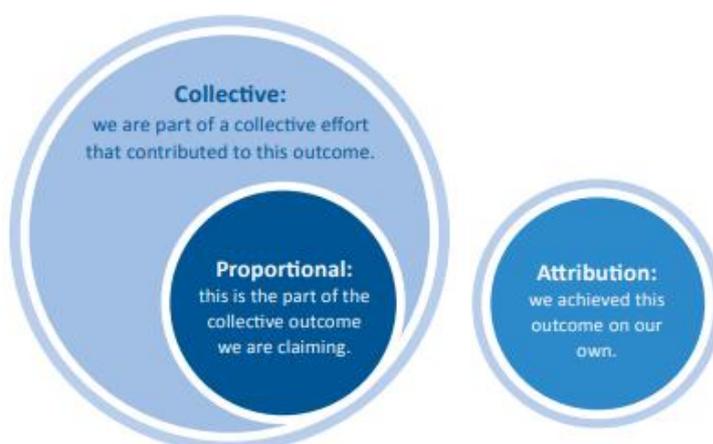
When setting targets, companies need to determine what is realistic to achieve through actions within their direct control and by working with other stakeholders. This is particularly important when companies aim to improve the state of biodiversity within a landscape where there are many direct and indirect pressures that affect the state. For example, a company that wants to decrease species extinction risk within a landscape needs to consider the pressures directly exerted by its activities, the pressures exerted by other stakeholders, and other pressures such as natural processes. The company may only have direct control over the pressures it exerts but it may have varying levels of influence over the activities of other businesses operating in the same landscape or non-business stakeholders such as civil society, local government and local communities. To set a realistic target, the company needs to consider what improvements it can achieve through its actions or in partnership with other stakeholders in the landscape.

Setting targets for the broader landscape and seascape where the company operates can offer substantial benefits. For example, by committing to not only reduce its own pressures but also engaging with other stakeholders in the landscape on potential avenues to reduce their pressures, the resulting improvement in the state of nature achieved can far exceed the sum of all individual contributions. There are also certain types of targets, for example on reducing risk to endangered, threatened and protected marine wildlife populations, that cannot be effectively achieved without collaboration with other stakeholders in the landscape. Nevertheless, companies need to consider which outcomes are attributable to their own actions and reflect this in their measurement of progress towards the target. This can be challenging as many factors influence the state of nature and there are often multiple actors within a landscape. Guidance on landscape level targets is evolving with the need to address issues of attributability, monitoring and the claims that companies can make based on the target (Box 4).

The TNFD recommends that companies choose targets for activities, impacts and outcomes that they have control or significant influence over. This helps to ensure that the target is achievable.

Box 4: Claiming contributions to landscape performance outcomes.

This position paper provides guidance on three types of claims a company can make when contributing to a landscape approach: collective claims, proportional claims and attribution claims.



ISEAL (2023) Effective company claims about contributions to landscape performance outcomes. Available [here](#).

It is important for companies to consider the outcomes that the target and associated actions could cause, to ensure that any change will not cause unintended consequences for nature and other stakeholders.^{14 15} Stakeholder engagement is important in the target setting process to ensure that targets are defined and progress measured with input from stakeholders. Guidance is available from TNFD¹⁶ and SBTN¹⁷, and

¹⁴ Page 91 and 147 <https://tnfd.global/publication/additional-guidance-on-assessment-of-nature-related-issues-the-leap-approach/>

¹⁵ TNFD generally encourages companies to go beyond their immediate sites or area of influence, and this section is focusing on TNFD's target setting guidance.

¹⁶ <https://tnfd.global/publication/guidance-on-engagement-with-indigenous-peoples-local-communities-and-affected-stakeholders/>

¹⁷ <https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Stakeholder-engagement-guidance-v1-0.pdf>

resources relevant to NNL and NPI are available.^{18 19} The IUCN Nature Positive approach also signposts towards guidance on social equity and safeguards.

NNL and NPI are applied to mitigate specific negative impacts directly caused by a development project. They can also be applied to mitigate cumulative impacts from multiple development projects in a landscape. The mitigation hierarchy guidance, which underpins the NNL and NPI approach, highlights the challenge of addressing cumulative and indirect impacts when taking action.²⁰ Cumulative and indirect impacts may be outside of a company's direct control, for example the impacts of other developments in a landscape. These can undermine the actions that a company is taking to make progress towards its targets, by negatively impacting the state of nature. Where cumulative impacts are identified, it is recommended to work collaboratively with stakeholders in a landscape to decide on the most appropriate and realistic measures to avoid and minimise impact.

Companies using the SBTN guidance will set targets for their own company to meet, or collective goals for a landscape initiative they are engaged in. To set a landscape engagement target, stakeholders within the initiative decide on collective goals for social and ecological conditions. As the objectives are decided collectively, the assumption is that these will be realistic and achievable through the actions of the stakeholders. Other SBTN targets are set for the individual company to meet. For example, the freshwater targets use local freshwater models to calculate all pollutant loading or water withdrawal in a basin. Although many companies and stakeholders can operate in a basin, the targets are then set for the individual company. SBTN explains that this is important to hold individual companies accountable.²¹ In addition, when companies set targets to reduce their own pressures, for example when setting a no conversion target and land footprint reduction target, the target may be more achievable as it is directly under the company's direct control or supply chain.

The IUCN Nature Positive approach includes recommendations to determine which threats to set targets to address. Companies are guided to calculate the STAR-t scores within a landscape. This is used to identify the species at threat within the landscape and the threats these species are under. The threats may be under the direct influence of a company such as mining and quarrying, and livestock farming and ranching, or the company may not have direct control over the threat such as storms, flooding and volcanoes. The IUCN Nature Positive approach includes guidance for companies to use STAR-t and set targets for ongoing impacts based on the specific defined threats that directly relate to the sectoral activities. This implies that the target reflects the threats that are under the company's sphere of influence or direct control. The company is then responsible for a share of the threats based on its share of the relevant economic activity.

¹⁸ <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cobi.13184#:~:text=Demonstrably%20fulfilling%20the%20no%2Dworse,eq%20to%20any%20social%20losses>.

¹⁹ <https://iucn.org/resources/grey-literature/ensuring-no-net-loss-people-well-biodiversity-good-practice-principles>

²⁰ <https://www.ipieca.org/resources/a-cross-sector-guide-for-implementing-the-mitigation-hierarchy>

²¹ <https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Step-3-Freshwater-FAQs-v1.1.pdf>

6. Measuring progress against baselines

Baselines or counterfactuals, against which to monitor progress towards the target, are required in all the target setting approaches reviewed (Box 5). Each target setting approach recognises the importance of targets being clearly defined, measurable or quantifiable, and actionable with time-bound objectives. Baselines should be relevant to the target and can measure the state of biodiversity or the level of pressure at a specific time.

Box 5: Baselines, counterfactuals and reference condition.

Baselines are a fixed point against which change can be measured, for example the state of biodiversity measured at a certain time.

Counterfactuals are predicted scenarios, for example the state of biodiversity without development, or with development and no conservation measures in place.

Reference condition is the *“condition against which past, present and future ecosystem condition (or other aspect of the state of nature) is compared in order to measure relative change over time”*.

Bull *et al.* (2014) Importance of Baseline Specification in Evaluating Conservation Interventions and Achieving No Net Loss of Biodiversity. Available [here](#).

TNFD (2025) Glossary of terms. Available [here](#).

The TNFD sets out the general principles for a target, which includes that baselines should be clearly defined and ideally consistent across all targets. This is important to ensure that a company can monitor and report on progress regularly.²²

Baselines in the NNL and NPI approach should be tailored to reflect the biodiversity features that are the focus of the commitment, which may include species, habitats, and/or ecosystems. NNL and NPI best-practice guidance outlines that the baseline is dependent on whether the goal is applied to existing sites, expanding sites, or ecologically degraded areas.²³ Within the NNL and NPI approach, typically the baseline is the pre-development state. There are potential challenges with pre-development state baselines, for example a mine project can be operational for a long time and the type of biodiversity an area is able to support can change in that time, for example due to changes in other human land uses in the surrounding area or due to the effects of climate change. An alternative to using a baseline is to compare the outcomes of the NNL and NPI goal against counterfactuals, for example a scenario predicting the state of biodiversity without the project intervention. Using baselines or counterfactuals is important to ensure that NNL and NPI commitments meet science-based criteria (Box 6). Companies should consider which baseline or

²² https://tnfd.global/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Guidance_on_the_identification_and_assessment_of_nature-related_issues_The_TNFD_LEAP_approach_V1.1_October2023.pdf?v=1698403116

²³ <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2015-003.pdf>

counterfactual is most relevant to their project and consider how the choice of the baseline or counterfactual will affect the way in which any impact is evaluated.²⁴

Box 6: A review of corporate no net loss and net positive impact biodiversity commitments.

de Silva et al. assessed corporate commitments and found that some corporate NNL and NPI commitments do not meet the eight science-based criteria laid out in the paper. The eight criteria are important to ensure that any commitments are robust, and include defining the biodiversity and impact scope, having measurable commitments against a baseline or counterfactual scenario, adhering to the mitigation hierarchy, acknowledging upper limits of impacts, using a timeframe, and transparently disclosing goals and progress.

de Silva et al. (2019) The evolution of corporate no net loss and net positive impact biodiversity commitments: Understanding appetite and addressing challenges. Available [here](#).

Guidance on calculating a baseline is set out by SBTN in Step 3. As SBTN mostly takes a pressure-based approach to target setting, the baselines often capture the level of pressures emitted in a previous year. Some targets require certain metrics to be selected as a baseline. For example the freshwater quantity targets require the volume of water withdrawn per month. Other targets have less prescriptive guidance provided for the baseline, as this will depend on the aims of the target and the data availability. For example, Target 3: Landscape Engagement focuses on taking action and could include metrics on biodiversity as the baseline. This will depend on the collective goals of the landscape approach. Potential metrics include using a STAR score at the landscape scale to assess the species extinction risk or an assessment of ecosystem service provision. Baselines are a principle of setting a science-based target, and this data can be required as part of the validation criteria for some targets such as the freshwater and ocean targets and Land Target 2: Land footprint reduction.

The IUCN Nature Positive approach includes clear requirements for using a baseline. Calibrated STAR can be used to set a baseline that relates to the state of biodiversity. In future versions of the guidance it is also intended that there will be an ecosystem state metric. Baselines should also be set for the intensity of threats that the company sets targets to address, using metrics that make sense for each of these threats. The guidance currently suggests using 2020 as the baseline year for assessing existing impacts. Progress towards the target is then tracked based on change in threat intensity measured against the baseline. This can be related back to the Realised STAR score through an assumption that reductions in threat intensity result in reductions in species extinction risk.²⁵

Looking forward

The target setting landscape is continuing to evolve, in large part in response to a greater need for businesses to be held accountable. There is growing interest in landscape approaches, as landscape level approaches can support corporates in meeting both climate and nature targets as well as improving social impacts and mitigating supply chain risks.²⁶ This is reflected in the applicability of target setting guidance for landscapes.^{27 28} However, there are still gaps in the guidance to support companies with setting landscape targets, for example detailed guidance on attributing responsibility for achieving targets to

²⁴ <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/cobi.12243>

²⁵ Calibrated STAR is ground-truthed based on site-specific data. Realised STAR shows the contributions companies make to STAR through conservation action https://app.ibat-alliance.org/pdf/star_business_user_guidance.pdf

²⁶ https://resources.unep-wcmc.org/products/WCMC_RT617

²⁷ https://cdn.cdp.net/cdp-production/comfy/cms/files/files/000/007/019/original/CDP_CM_Factsheet_2022.pdf

²⁸ <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/landscapes/business-case-studies/>

different actors is still evolving. It is important for companies to be aware of these gaps and share learnings from their practical examples of engaging in landscape scale initiatives.

The role of companies in setting targets and driving action to meet national and international policy goals is well recognised. Corporates have an important role to play in helping to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) which align with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Companies should make themselves aware of the NBSAPs for relevant jurisdictions, and align their targets with national priorities where possible.

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