

Every Job is a Nature Job

Guidance for Sustainability Professionals: Integrating Nature into Every Job

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Image: Island surrounded by a healthy coral reef off the coast of North Sulawesi, Indonesia stock.adobe.com #1322370616

Introduction

All businesses are dependent on and impact nature, both directly and through their value chains. By addressing their relationship with nature, companies have an opportunity to increase operational and supply chain resilience and improve their relationships with stakeholders. From addressing the significant nature-related risks businesses face in their day-to-day operations to taking advantage of the wide range of opportunities ecosystems present, nature truly is a part of every job.

The increasing focus on the nature-agenda for investors, regulators and businesses will rapidly accelerate as the consequences of biodiversity decline materialize¹. This is driving businesses to adjust their ways of working and to address nature dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities. Those that are successful in this transition will be better positioned to meet the evolving requirements of stakeholders while building the long-term resilience of their business.

This guidance offers two case studies on the experiences of sustainability teams seeking to integrate nature considerations across their businesses. It also draws out recommendations on how to engage leadership and the C-Suite effectively on the topic.

World Economic Forum (2025). Global Risk Report 2025. (Available [here](#))

Case studies on integrating nature into every job

As part of the nature or sustainability team, one of your core responsibilities is using your expertise to translate technical guidance into tangible actions for various business functions. This requires engaging with leadership to ensure that nature is included in the corporate strategy, integrating it across business functions, and implementing function-specific actions to deliver the strategy. Transforming businesses to align with global goals for nature requires strong stakeholder management, a clear vision, and sustained momentum. This document draws on interviews conducted with various companies. It presents two examples of how teams have guided their businesses and the departments within to create and implement their nature strategy.

The key takeaways

- Work with leadership to align perspectives on what nature means to your business. This will **ensure consistency on company direction**, that action is taken on priority topics and that it is monitored meaningfully.
- Understand the priorities of actors across your value chain by **actively engaging with suppliers and customers** to understand their expectations and capacity in managing identified nature-related risks and opportunities.
- Share success stories across the business, **highlighting the value your team adds** and how the implementation of the nature strategy is progressing.

Case Study 1: Engaging and educating leadership about nature and presenting a business case for it

Global multinational food and beverage company with a portfolio of consumer brands.

The international sustainability team was tasked with creating an ESG strategy that incorporated nature, highlighting the company's significant dependency on a stable supply of agricultural raw materials. Once presented with the details, leadership had reservations about the suggested nature-specific components of the strategy. As the sustainability team realized that this was due to leadership's unfamiliarity with the topic, the team took action to build leadership's capacity on business-relevant aspects of nature. These actions were crucial to securing support from leadership, ensuring their ownership of the strategy and the long-term availability of financial support for implementation.

Challenges encountered by the team:

- » Problems in **communicating about sustainability and nature to leadership**, as these topics were largely outside their established knowledge base.
- » Uncertainties over how to **effectively present information** without overloading leadership with technical terms.
- » Challenges with aligning leadership's approach to **business transformation with the pace demanded by nature dependencies** and established scientific targets.
- » **Difficulties with gaining accurate baselines** for nature across their value chain.

Actions taken to overcome challenges:

- » **Engaged with leadership individually** to improve their understanding of the connections between nature and their business function.
- » **Built the capacity of directors and senior management** on their role in the nature strategy to gain their support.
- » **Explained technical terms and new topics** to leadership by highlighting their relevance to already identified risks in the materiality assessment.
- » **Conveyed a sense of urgency and the business case** for nature by highlighting industry macro statistics and case studies on first movers.
- » **Identified and detailed nature-related risks** in materiality assessments, then **linked these to macro or industry-wide statistics** on corporate risks and actions to support the business case.
- » **Leveraged materiality assessments of suppliers and customers** to prioritize further monitoring and action on nature across its value chain.
- » **Leveraged national news stories** on sustainability-related topics to encourage the leadership team to be ambitious, retain their focus and keep them committed.

Case Study 2: Supporting evolving nature ambition through internal scope adjustment and external partnerships

A forestry company that owns private forests for its sourcing. They provide and design products for renewable packaging, biomaterials and wooden construction.

As a forestry company, their interface with nature has historically been embedded in the company culture. This exposure to nature impacts led to a strong level of nature expertise across the business. With longstanding nature actions endorsed by leadership, the team is navigating the dynamics of evolving ambitions to ensure that the company remains a leader with regard to nature across the industry. They aim to strengthen external collaboration while managing the internal impact of negative nature-related incidents.

Challenges encountered by the team:

- » Problems with **balancing emerging nature requirements and other priorities** of the business.
- » Difficulties in measuring outcomes and driving adaptive management due to **limitations in the availability of tools and data**.
- » Challenges with **managing a site-level incident impacting nature**, which then garnered negative media coverage, affecting public perception of the company and overshadowing its nature initiatives.

Actions taken to overcome challenges:

- » **Clearly defined what positive outcome for nature looks like** at a business function level, using the team's expertise and working with stakeholders.
- » **Built internal metrics to measure and track biodiversity**, leveraging site-level data and capacity to provide information useful to leadership for decision making.
- » **Set up and utilized an annual biodiversity meeting with the board** to keep the company focused on current and emerging risks and opportunities related to dependencies and impacts on nature.
- » **Reaffirmed and updated the responsibilities** of the nature team to include:
 - **Ownership of delivering on the nature-related requirements of customers.**
 - **Ensuring that the nature ambition remains progressive but realistic** to balance with business priorities.
 - **Interpreting and explaining** internally the evolving ambitions of regulators and customers.
 - **Establishing joint nature goals** with key stakeholders across the value chain.
 - **Continuing to instruct functions on the day-to-day actions** to improve nature performance in alignment with evolving ambitions.
- » **Ensured strategic engagement with customers** across the value chain to identify those who:
 - **Were willing to have transparent conversations** on difficulties around supply chain assessments.
 - **Had strong sustainability management and governance** across their operations internally.
 - **Were willing to contribute to commonly agreed-upon goals** at the site level, such as supporting data collection.

Lessons learned: influencing and securing the support of the C-Suite

Gaining an audience with the C-Suite may require a persistent effort and iterative reframing of the topic that you are trying to put on the agenda. To demonstrate the relevance of nature, it is important to highlight its overlaps with commercial strategies and core company values. Members of the C-Suite are often unfamiliar with nature concepts. As such,

building on already familiar topics and gradually increasing understanding of nature topics is crucial for enabling the C-Suite to engage effectively in strategy implementation. There is also a need for alignment between directors and senior management on the direction of the company's nature strategy to ensure consistent messaging.

STEP 1

APPROACHING THE C-SUITE



STEP 2

BUILDING THE BUSINESS CASE



STEP 3

ADDRESSING THE C-SUITE



- Leverage opportunities that **make the issue of nature feel more relevant**, for example:
 - Existing and emerging regulations
 - News coverage or campaign relevant to your industry
 - Internal awareness of nature-related risk
- **Build the capacity of non-C-Suite leadership on the relevance of nature to their business area** to gain companywide buy-in for nature. Ensure they communicate a nature message to the C-Suite which is consistent with yours.
- **Meet with C-Suite members individually** for a targeted discussion on the role their function has in achieving the nature strategy. Aim to secure individual support before bringing nature to the C-Suite agenda.
- Make multiple attempts to get the buy-in from the C-Suite (if required). **When re-approaching them, re-frame the message**, linking it to recent events and the latest strategy.

- **Highlight the relevance of nature to the business** by using company-specific materiality assessments. Make sure to identify significant impacts and dependencies on nature and highlight priority nature-related risks and opportunities.
- **Demonstrate how nature risks and opportunities intersect with the commercial strategy.** Show how it can strengthen existing efforts and open new opportunities for supply chain resilience and R&D, for example.
- **Benchmark nature efforts and targets of your company against your peers.** Use this analysis to highlight successes to leadership and highlight the work needed to close the gap.

- **Provide targeted information about nature to the C-Suite.** Focus on the most relevant risks and dependencies for your business and industry. Incorporate your findings from building the business case, supplementing it with industry-wide data or best practices.
- **When framing the business case, emphasize the opportunities that nature can bring.** While risk mitigation and legal compliance are key considerations, positive messages can be more effective when it comes to engaging the interest of the C-suite. Focus on the nature successes that have already been achieved in the business.
- **Be clear on where the ownership and next steps lie.** If members outside your team are expected to carry out actions, ensure that senior management will be briefed by the C-Suite on priorities moving forward.
- **Align expected governance with the C-Suite.** Consider the reporting routines that need to be implemented and which teams need to be involved.
- **Emphasize the need for change management** for nature actions being rolled out throughout the company. Be clear on the role that the C-Suite will need to play with coordinating transition messaging and pushing the nature vision.



Image: Drone bird's eye view landscape image of tidal wetlands in Christchurch Harbour on England's South Coast, stock.adobe.com #365714450

About UNEP-WCMC and the Proteus Partnership

The UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is a global centre of excellence on biodiversity and nature's contribution to society and the economy. The Proteus Partnership is a unique collaboration that provides companies with the biodiversity information needed for better informed decisions, and supports the development, improvement and dissemination of global biodiversity data and information. Proteus supports companies to recognize their responsibilities for nature in the context of global momentum to address the biodiversity crisis.

This brief was developed through interviews with Proteus Partners and other multinational businesses and draws on the expertise of UNEP-WCMC experts in applying biodiversity knowledge in the context of a wide range of sectors.