Ecologic Institute

Science and Policy
for a Sustainable World

Restoring nature, restoring our future: From global goals to local gains

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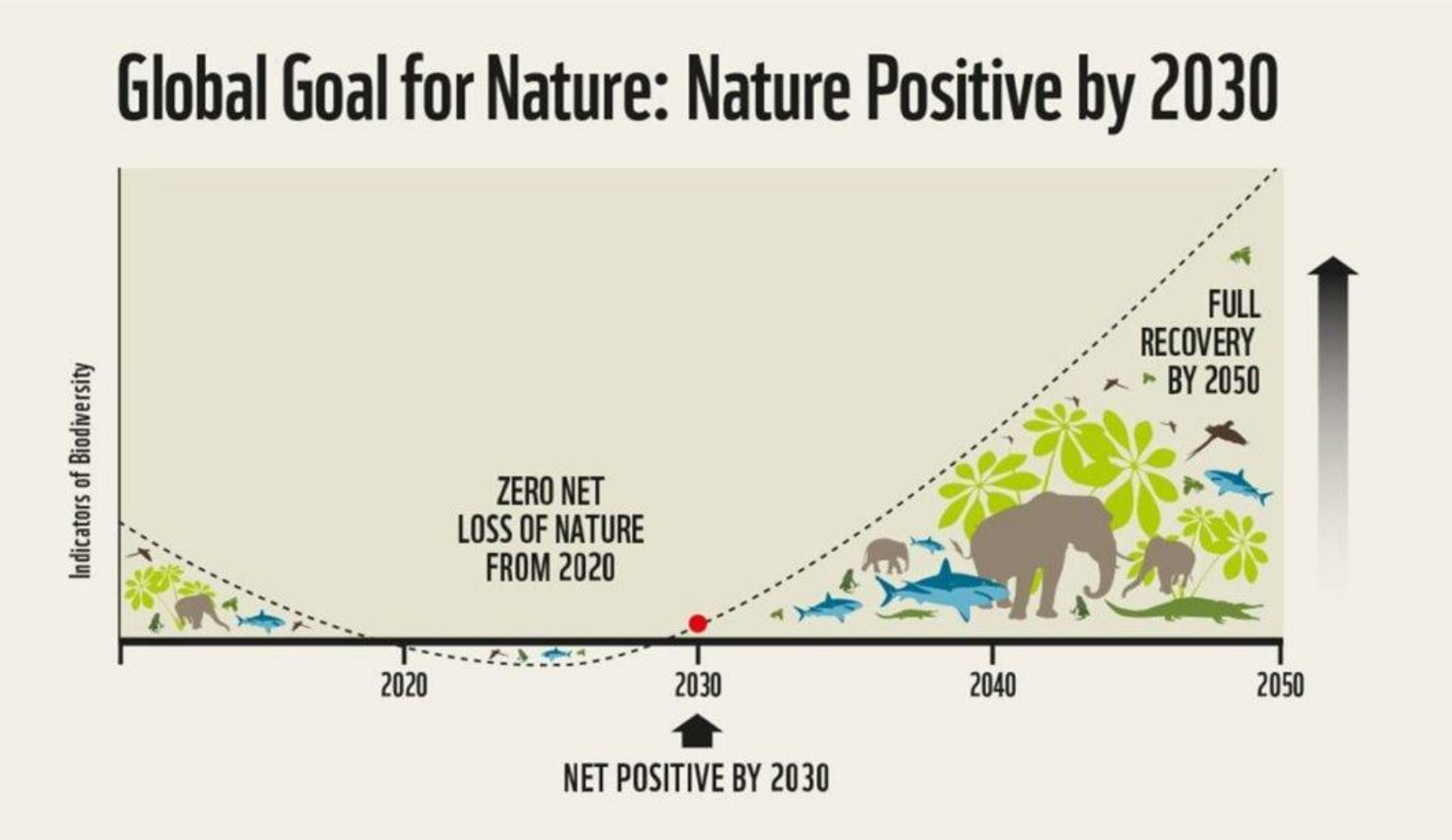
Vilm, 4 August 2025 (online)

From crisis to recovery: Time to „bend the curve“

Almost ¾ of monitored wildlife populations have been lost in just 50 years (WWF Living Planet Report 2024)



Leclère et al., 2020

Time to act: Restoration as a cornerstone of recovery

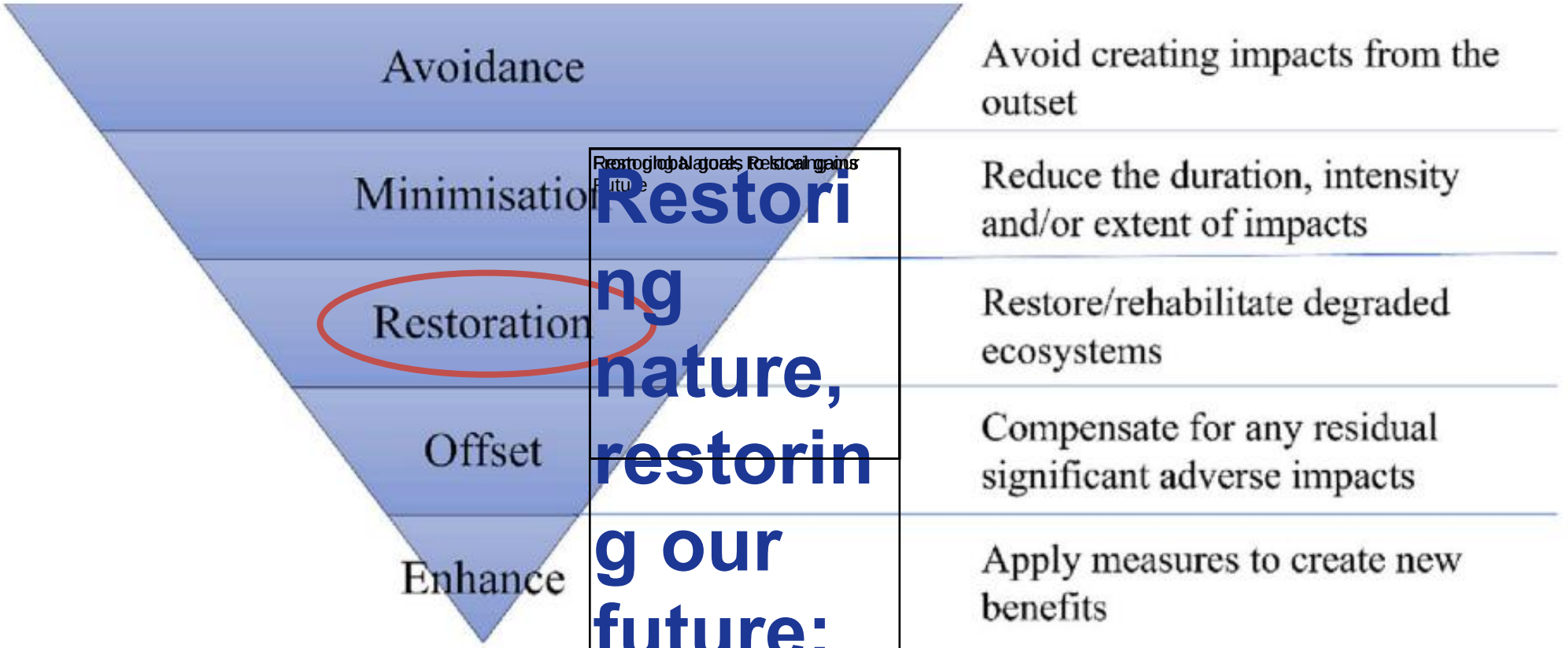


Fig. 1. The mitigation hierarchy (adapted from Glasson and Therivel, 2019).

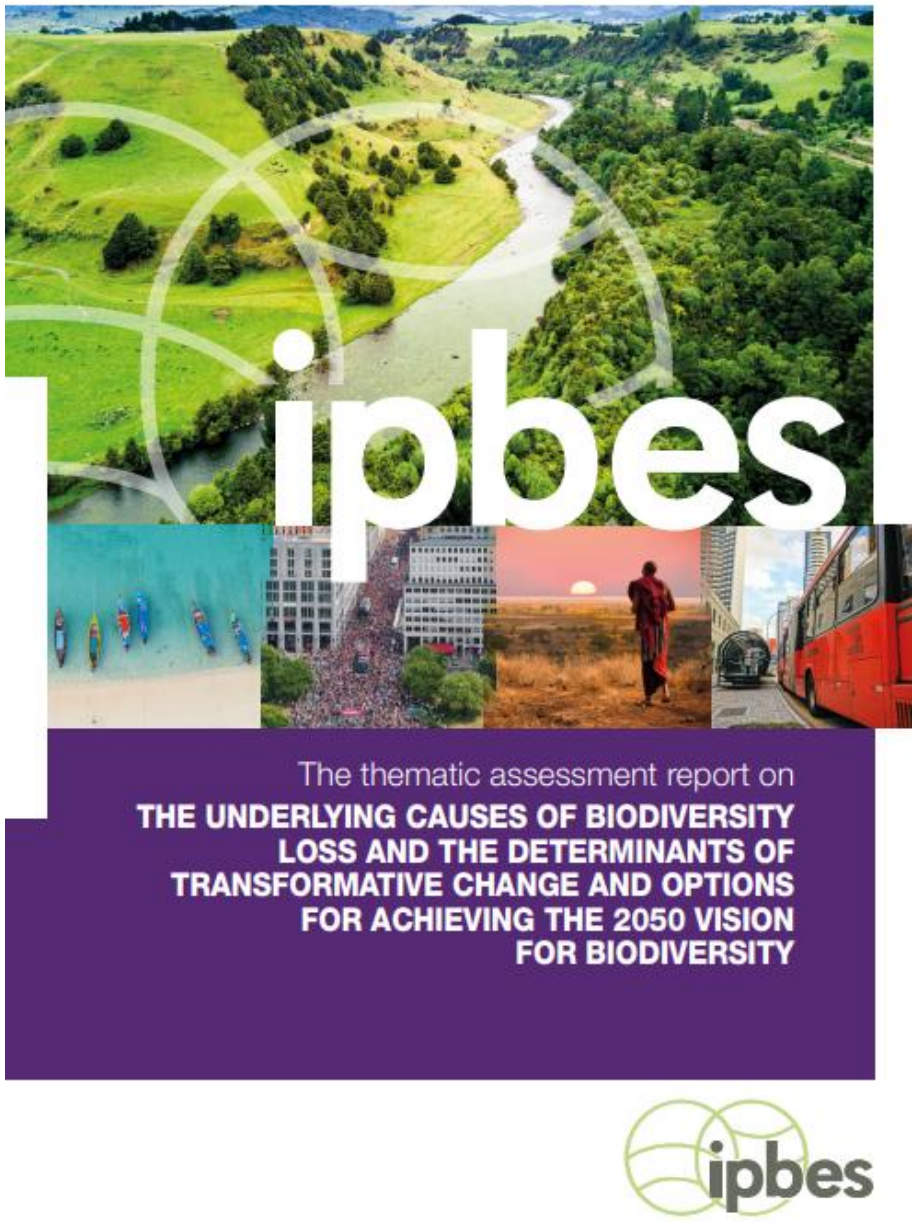
Restoring nature, restoring our future: From

Cares et al., 2023

International efforts to biodiversity restoration

Kunming - Montreal
GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

- Adopted in August 2022 (UN CBD COP15)
- Target 2: **Restore at least 30%** of all degraded ecosystems **by 2030** (30x30)
- Countries are currently updating their NBSAPs to include the GBF targets



Transformative change: From incremental to systemic shifts

- Transformative change is "*a fundamental,* ***system-wide reorganization*** *across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values*"

- Four principles to guide transformative change:

  1. Equity and justice
  2. Pluralism and inclusion
  3. Respectful and reciprocal human-nature relationships
  4. Adaptive learning and action

Restoration provides a key entry point for transformative change but requires action and support at *local level* and *across society*

IPBES, 2025

Restoration for people and planet: The role of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS)

Linking ecosystem restoration with societal resilience, human health and well-being

- "Actions to protect, conserve**, restore,** sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems…
- …address **social, economic and environmental challenges** effectively and adaptively
- …**simultaneously providing** human well being, ecosystem services and **resilience** and **biodiversity** benefits."

UNEA Resolution, 2022

When designed restoratively, NbS can:

Enhance **climate resilience** and **disaster risk reduction**:
→ Restored wetlands reduce flood risks and buffer storms.
→ Coastal mangroves mitigate erosion and storm surges.

Support **climate mitigation**:
→ Restored forests act as **carbon sinks**, sequestering CO_2.
→ Urban green areas help **cool cities** and reduce heat stress

Promote **human health and well-being**:
→ Urban green spaces improve **air quality, physical activity, and mental health**.
→ Access to nature supports **stress reduction** and **social cohesion**.

Strengthen **agri-food systems**:
→ Agroecological systems improve **soil fertility**, **biodiversity**, and produce **healthier food**.

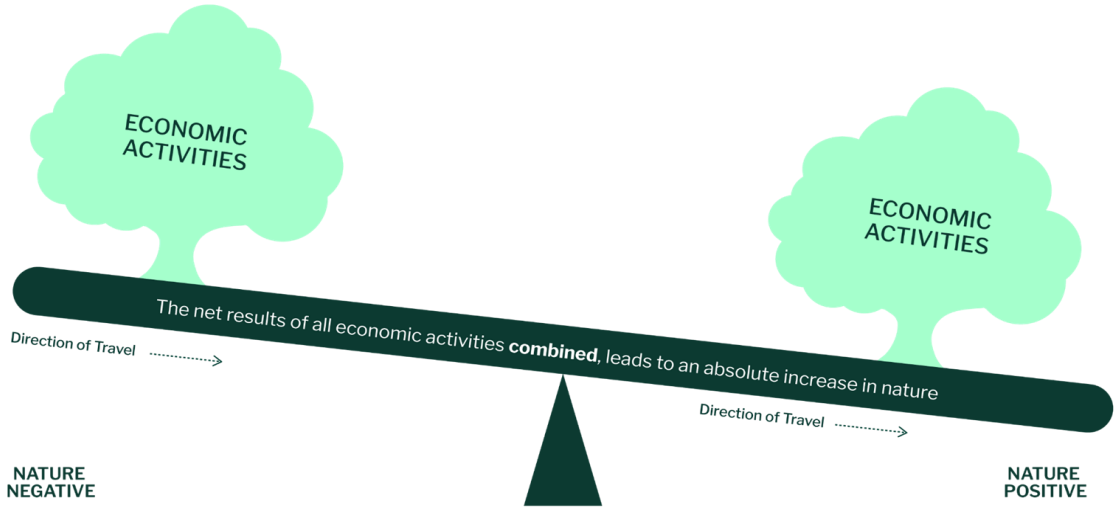
→ NbS are a strategic communications tool

What is a Nature-Positive Economy

Investing in restoration = investing in the future

An economy where the **net** result of **all economic activities combined** lead to an absolute **increase in nature**, to the point of full recovery.

- Priorities are to increase social prosperity, restore ecological conditions, and increased uptake of diverse values of nature.
- Full recovery means that nature recovers so that thriving ecosystems continue to support future generations.
- The economy undergoes a transition ***away*** from nature-negative activities ***towards*** more nature-positive activities.

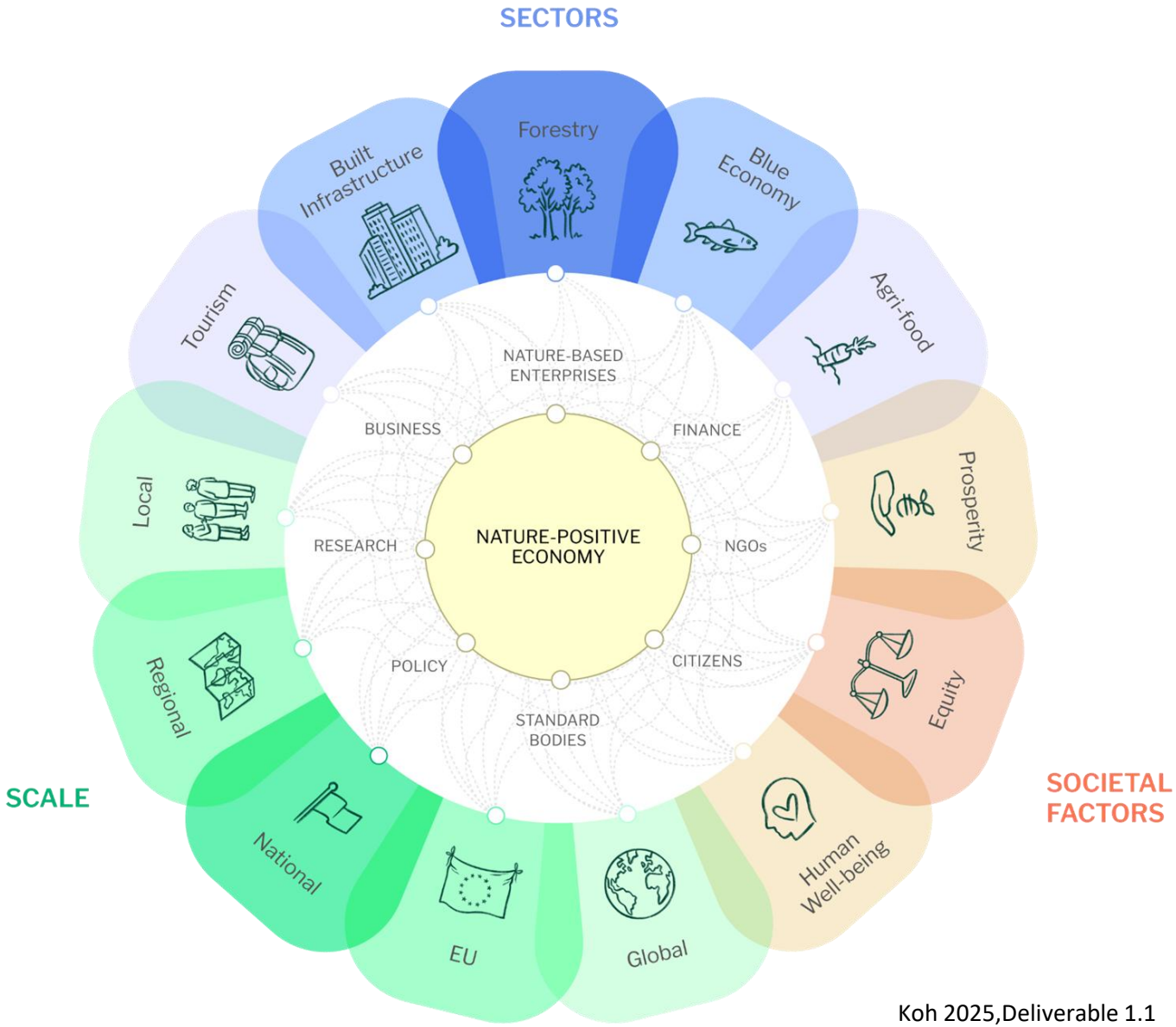


Koh 2025,Deliverable 1.1

How do we **operationalise** the Nature-Positive Economy?

Through **5 key elements**:

1. **Actors**
2. take action
3. across **multiple scales** and
4. sectors
5. to improve social well-being and equity.



Koh 2025,Deliverable 1.1

Understanding the EU policy landscape: Where are we now?

GoNaturePositive!

Cross-sectoral approach





Mapping

1. Policy landscape:

Longlist of >60 policy instruments; shortlist of 20

2. Co-operative initiatives:

Selection of 20 global and EU initiatives

Assessment

- Reduce harmful activities
- Create additional nature
- Increase knowledge
- Support transformative change

Synthesis

Barriers, gaps, and opportunities for sectoral and systemic change

Kupilas et al. 2025,Deliverable 1.3

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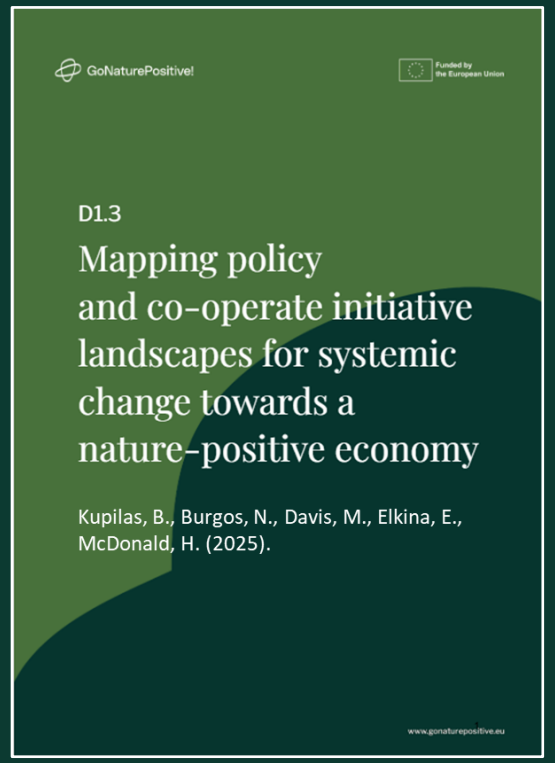
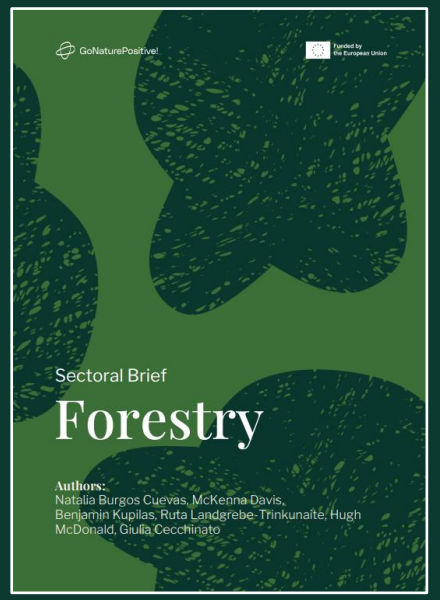
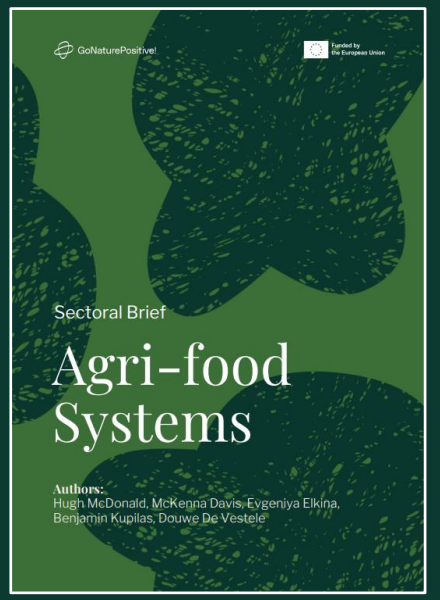
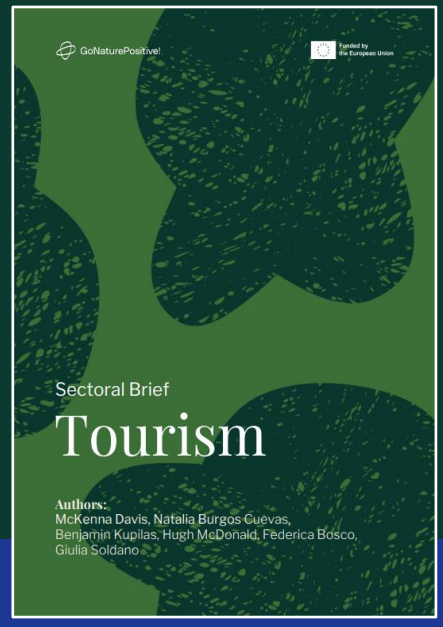
Final products, available for download:

Main report and five sectoral briefs









EU Nature Restoration Regulation

- Landmark legislation aimed at restoring degraded ecosystems across Europe
- First continent-wide, legally-binding restoration law across all ecosystems
- Adopted in August 2024, following a two-year negotiation process
- The proposed law was at risk of failure several times
- It received strong backlash from agriculture, forestry and fisheries lobby groups

Main objectives:

By 2030, **at least 20%** of the EU's land and sea areas are restored.

By 2050, restoration measures are in place for **all ecosystems** that need restoration.

National-Level Action

- EU Member States are now drafting their **National Restoration Plans (NRPs)**, with draft submission due by September 2026
    - Plan defines short-, medium-, and long-term goals for all degraded ecosystems
    - Federal and state authorities jointly develop the first draft of Germany's National Restoration Plan
    - Alpine Nature Restoration Workshop (Sept 4, 2025) – Fostering cross-border exchange and synergies in developing National Restoration Plans for the Alpine region
    - Ecologic Institut assists the BfN with the development of the NRP

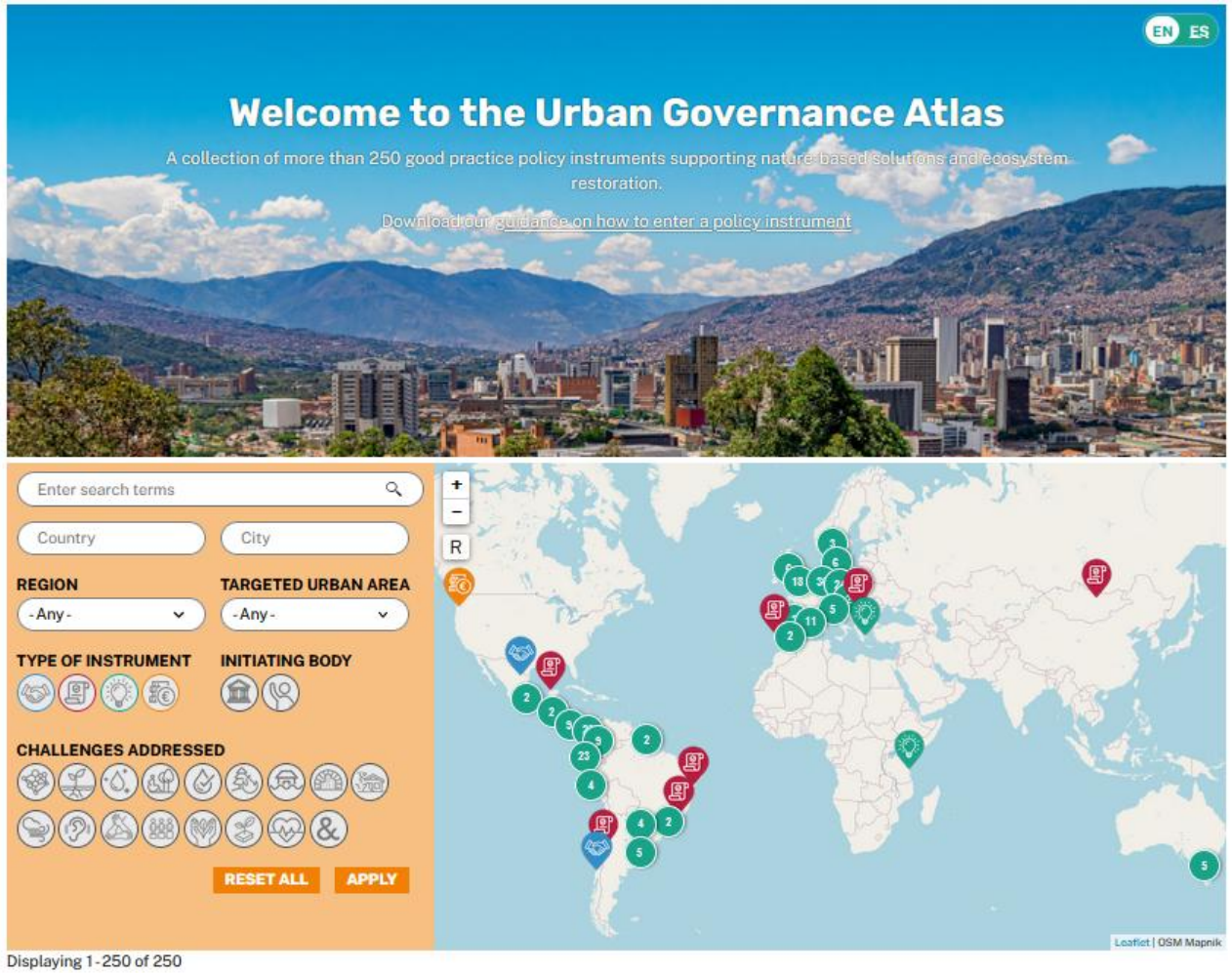
Local level: Turning ambition into action

- **Implementation** will ultimately happen **locally**: in municipalities, regions, and landscapes.
- **Stakeholder engagement** is critical for success, including: landowners, farmers, NGOs, and communities.
- Local action is where **global targets become visible** and benefits are tangible: cleaner water, cooler cities, flood protection, and biodiversity.

Urban Governance Atlas (UGA)

A collection of more than **250 policy instruments** supporting nature-based solutions and ecosystem restoration

INTERLACE
RESTORING URBAN ECOSYSTEMS
RECUPERANDO ECOSISTEMAS URBANOS



Aims to:

- Foster **ecologically coherent, inclusive planning** for urban ecosystem restoration and green space planning
- **Inspire global action** through good practice instruments, including lessons learned
- Represent **diverse contexts** (institutional/ geographic) – bottom up & top down

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Thank you!

Let's turn plans into thriving nature for people, the economy, and our future.

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