



A BIODIVERSIFY SERIES

Embedding Nature into Enterprise Strategy

How to Make The Business Case for Nature

A group of five people are standing in a lush, green forest. They are dressed in business casual attire. The scene is dimly lit, with a dark green overlay. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

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THE ELEMENTS OF A
SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS CASE
FOR NATURE ARE NOT UNLIKE
THE ELEMENTS OF A GOOD STORY.

EMBEDDING NATURE INTO ENTERPRISE STRATGY

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FOREWORD

Businesses increasingly recognise that climate and nature cannot be addressed in isolation, yet many organisations are still grappling with how to translate ambition into meaningful action.

This report marks the beginning of a Biodiversify guide series designed to help bridge that gap. Across the series we explore how businesses can move beyond carbon tunnel vision, embed nature within procurement and supply chains, strengthen decision-grade data, and move from fragmented initiatives towards landscape-level resilience.

The insights shaping this report come directly from sustainability professionals navigating these challenges in their organisations. Biodiversify was proud to co-host the event “Accelerating Corporate Nature Positive Journeys” with the Corporate Partnerships team at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, where sustainability managers shared practical barriers and opportunities for embedding nature in business strategy. We are also grateful to members of the Nature and Biodiversity Peer Group, whose perspectives have contributed further insights.

This guide series has been made possible through the support of the Porticus Foundation.

Dr Sam Sinclair,

Co-Founder & Director, Biodiversify

Chair, Nature & Biodiversity Peer Group

EMBEDDING NATURE INTO ENTERPRISE STRATEGY

How to Make the Business Case for Nature

Nature-related risk is moving from sustainability conversations into core business decision-making. Regulation is tightening. Investors are paying closer attention to exposure. Supply chains are increasingly shaped by ecological constraints.

Yet inside many organisations, nature strategies stall.

This is rarely because leaders reject the premise. More often, it is because the internal business case has not been structured in a way that allows it to compete with other priorities.

In October 2025, at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, senior sustainability leaders gathered for a closed-door session of the Nature & Biodiversity Peer Group. Representatives from 56 companies, together accounting for more than £1.4 trillion in annual revenue, engaged in candid discussion on the structural challenges of embedding nature into enterprise strategy.

Across this session and the wider 525-member Peer Group, a clear theme emerged: making the business case for nature is currently the most significant barrier to progress in corporate nature strategy.

This guide is written for nature managers working inside large organisations. Its purpose is practical: to help you build a business case that can win internal traction and buy-in.

A business case is not simply a collection of data. It is a clear argument for what should change and why. The most effective cases described by participants shared four structural characteristics: a compelling hook, targeted evidence, clear urgency and defined organisational commitments. These elements help connect ecological risk to the commercial realities leaders are already managing.

But structure alone is insufficient. Execution depends on a second layer: operational discipline. Across sectors, leaders highlighted five recurring priorities that determine whether a business case gains traction inside complex organisations — avoiding data paralysis, leveraging existing strategic infrastructure, translating nature into commercial language, building institutional capability and treating the strategy as iterative rather than static.

We organise these insights into two complementary components:

The Four Pillars of a Defensible Business Case for Nature

The structural narrative required to compete with other enterprise priorities.

The Five Operational Priorities for Successfully Embedding Nature

The practical levers that determine whether a compelling story becomes an approved strategy.

Together, they shift nature from an ambition on paper to something that shapes real decisions.



WHY BUSINESS CASES FOR NATURE FAIL

Before exploring how to build an effective case, it is important to understand why so many stall.

Across sectors and geographies, five common barriers came up repeatedly in peer discussion:

- ✗ Data is collected without strategic prioritisation.
- ✗ Nature remains siloed within sustainability functions.
- ✗ It competes unsuccessfully with capital allocation priorities.
- ✗ Executive ownership and governance structures are unclear.

Participants described these barriers as recurring organisational friction points rather than disagreements about the underlying science.

Until these structural constraints are addressed, even well-intentioned strategies struggle to gain traction.

Additional data alone will not resolve this: what is often missing is a clear way to frame the conversation so it leads to action.

THE FOUR PILLARS OF NATURE NARRATIVE

At its core, a business case is a narrative about risk, resilience and future competitiveness. Every effective case tells a clear story: where the organisation stands today, how the external environment is shifting, what is at stake and what needs to happen next.

Four elements consistently distinguish business cases that gain traction from those that stall:

1. **A COMPELLING HOOK** – *The opening tension*
2. **TARGETED EVIDENCE** – *Proof that the tension is real*
3. **CLEAR URGENCY** – *The rising stakes*
4. **DEFINED ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE** – *The resolution*

Each plays a different role in helping leaders see why ecological risk matters to the business. We begin with the opening move in that narrative.

1. A COMPELLING HOOK: ESTABLISH STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

In any narrative, the opening determines whether the audience leans in or disengages.

Peer discussion consistently highlighted that the opening of a business case for nature must establish material relevance. If the first framing positions biodiversity as an environmental aspiration, the conversation remains in sustainability. If it positions nature as a driver of cost volatility, supply disruption, regulatory exposure or competitive positioning, it moves immediately into enterprise territory.

Stakeholders do not respond to biodiversity as an abstract concept. They respond to identifiable business risk and opportunity.

Different stakeholders require different entry points. The strength of the hook lies in choosing the framing that speaks directly to the decision-maker in the room.

THE HOOK	TARGET STAKEHOLDER	WHY IT RESONATES
<i>“The business is falling behind its peers.”</i>	Chief Executive Officer Chief Strategy Officer	Competitive positioning Strategic differentiation
<i>“Nature loss has led to rapid increases in prices of key commodities.”</i>	Chief Procurement Officer Head of Sourcing	Cost control Supply chain resilience
<i>“Other companies have seen financially material outcomes from nature action.”</i>	Chief Financial Officer	Investment credibility Return potential
<i>“The company may be exposed to serious unknown vulnerabilities.”</i>	Chief Risk Officer	Risk identification Risk mitigation
<i>“The severity of potential risks has been underestimated.”</i>	Legal	Disclosure exposure Fiduciary responsibility

The hook does not distort the science. It translates it into implications that capture attention.

Practitioners described this as the moment that often determines how the conversation unfolds. When the opening framing aligns with the priorities of finance, procurement or risk, resistance decreases and curiosity increases. When it does not, even strong evidence struggles to gain traction.

In simple terms, the hook sets up why this story matters to the organisation.

2. TARGETED EVIDENCE: PROVE THE STAKES ARE REAL

If the hook establishes why the issue matters, the evidence must show that the concern is grounded in reality.

Evidence strengthens a business case, but it cannot carry it on its own. Several participants observed that internal momentum often slows when teams try to measure everything before clarifying the decision they are seeking to influence. In those situations, analysis expands while strategic direction remains unclear.

The most effective business cases use evidence selectively. The aim is not comprehensiveness, but relevance. The depth of analysis should match the size of the change you are asking for. A pilot initiative may only require directional insight to test feasibility. A structural capital commitment, by contrast, demands traceable and defensible rigour.

Illustrative examples, such as exposure to commodity volatility, concentration of sourcing in high-risk regions, or scenario analysis linking ecosystem decline to cost pressure, can make ecological risk tangible in commercial terms.

The goal is not perfect measurement. The goal is enough clarity to move the next decision forward.

3. CLEAR URGENCY: CLARIFY WHY ACTION CANNOT WAIT

If evidence establishes credibility, urgency makes the consequence clearer.

Executives prioritise based on timing as much as materiality. A strong business case should explain not only why nature matters, but what happens if action is delayed.

Across peer discussion, three drivers of urgency came up repeatedly:



REGULATORY ACCELERATION

While many organisations are aware of existing disclosure obligations, fewer have fully assessed the pace and breadth of emerging nature-related requirements.

Regulatory exposure is expanding across jurisdictions, particularly in relation to supply chain due diligence and disclosure.



PATH DEPENDENCY

Capital investments, sourcing contracts and product design decisions lock organisations into ecological exposure for years.

Decisions made today shape risk profiles well beyond the current reporting cycle.



DIMINISHING ADVANTAGE

Access to resilient suppliers, influence over emerging standards and reputational differentiation are not static.

As more companies move into this space, the window for early positioning narrows.

Urgency does not require alarmism. It requires clarity about what changes if nothing changes.

For practitioners, this section often determines whether the conversation shifts from interest to action.

4. DEFINE DESIRED CHANGE: SPECIFY WHAT MUST HAPPEN

If urgency clarifies consequence, commitment defines action.

The purpose of the business case is to encourage senior leaders to change the way a company is managed. This is more likely to happen when the desired change is clear.

Change may take different forms depending on where the organisation is starting from, but typically involves one or more of the following:



DECISION: *Approval of investment, endorsement of targets or allocation of internal resources.*



ACTION: *Commissioning further analysis, initiating pilots or engaging priority suppliers.*



CAPABILITY: *Investment in systems, tools, data infrastructure or specialist expertise.*



GOVERNANCE: *Clarifying ownership, embedding accountability and aligning board oversight.*



MINDSET: *Shifting from compliance-driven framing to enterprise risk integration.*

As one participant observed, endorsement without ownership rarely shifts capital or procurement decisions. Nature becomes part of how the business is run when ownership extends beyond the sustainability team.

PRESSURE-TESTING THE NARRATIVE

Several participants described the business case for nature not as a technical exercise, but as a structured narrative about organisational risk and resilience.

Practitioners found it useful to assess whether their case addressed the following questions:

Is the protagonist clear?

Does the case centre the organisation's long-term resilience and competitiveness?

Is the tension defined?

Are regulatory exposure, commodity volatility, supply chain instability or reputational risk clearly articulated?

Is the commercial relevance explicit?

Is the language aligned with finance, procurement and risk priorities?

Is the cost of inaction stated?

What changes if the organisation delays action?

Is the required commitment specific?

Does the case define the decision or action being requested?

When these elements are explicit, leaders can see what is being asked and why it matters.

THE FIVE OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR EMBEDDING NATURE

If the Four Components shape the story, the following priorities shape what actually happens next. Each surfaced repeatedly during peer discussion.

1. AVOID DATA PARALYSIS: BEGIN WITH DIRECTIONAL CLARITY

Nature measurement is inherently complex. Complexity should not become a barrier to progress.

Many organisations expect a single “all-encompassing” metric. This can lead to what one participant described as a “data trap,” in which everything is measured and nothing is prioritised.

As one FMCG participant put it:

“You could be measuring anything. The question is: what are you trying to move internally?”

Another reflected:

“When we first mapped our risks, everything was red. It was paralyzing.”

Early analysis tends to be most effective when it is focused. Rather than attempting comprehensive measurement across all commodities and geographies, practitioners can begin by identifying likely hotspots, material sourcing regions or priority product categories.

The Sustainability Leader's Toolkit: Using Free Tools to Make Progress

Budget and capability constraints are real, but they are not insurmountable. Science-backed tools allow directional screening:

ENCORE: Industry-level impact and dependency analysis.

WWF Biodiversity Risk Filter: Location-based for physical and regulatory risks using secondary data layers with no technical GIS knowledge needed.

Proxy or Secondary Data: Satellite-derived forest cover, regional water-stress indices, or industry average impact factors.

The aim at this stage is sufficient clarity about where risk may concentrate to inform the next internal conversation.

2. LEVERAGE EXISTING STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE: EMBED WITHIN WHAT ALREADY MOVES CAPITAL

Nature strategies rarely succeed when positioned as standalone initiatives.

Participants consistently emphasised the importance of embedding nature considerations within existing structures (particularly climate, water, procurement and enterprise risk management systems.)

Water as a Gateway

Water stewardship was frequently described as a practical entry point. As one participant observed:

“Water already has operational and financial relevance internally. It creates a bridge.”

Water is already recognised as financially material. Embedding biodiversity into water programmes can advance nature objectives without structural reinvention.

Framework Credibility

For many companies, the up-hill struggle of making the business case can be made easier with methodologies such as SBTN. They carry significant weight by being viewed as the “gold standard” for nature, mirroring the journey that many companies have taken with SBTi for carbon.

As one leader noted:

“Being able to say ‘we are aligned with SBTN’ is powerful shorthand that can communicate immediate credibility.”

The ‘Step Up for Nature’ Pathway

A common misconception is that SBTN requires a total submission, but the process has become increasingly pragmatic through the new ‘Step Up for Nature’ initiative. This allows for the validation of Step 1 (Assess) and Step 2 (Prioritise) as standalone milestones, providing a pathway that is both quicker, and simpler, enabling earlier institutional wins and building confidence for more complex, long-term target setting.

3. TRANSLATE NATURE INTO COMMERCIAL LANGUAGE: POSITION FOR INTERNAL TRACTION

How nature is framed internally determines whether it influences decisions.

Several participants noted that terminology familiar within sustainability functions may not resonate across finance, procurement or risk teams.

As one retail-sector participant reflected:

“I would never use the term ‘nature positive’ in a commercial conversation. I talk about supply continuity, input cost volatility and exposure.”

By using terminology that is familiar to your audience, using ‘supply chain continuity’ for procurement teams or ‘asset protection’ for risk teams, you can remove the fear of the unknown and present your business case to them using phrases that already mean something within the context of their roles.

Framing Nature Through Risk and ROI

By framing nature through the lens of risk, organisations can shift the narrative from scientific concepts to tangible commercial impacts. Assessing how nature-related dependencies, such as pollination or soil health, can affect supply chain stability and price volatility makes the case undeniable.

The role of the practitioner is to select the framing most likely to resonate with the stakeholder in the room.

Effective translation does not alter the science. It clarifies the business implications.

Highlighting “Early Wins” vs Long-Term Value

A key challenge is that nature initiatives often generate measurable returns over long horizons, making it important to communicate the value of such investments.

As one leader observed:

“With marketing, it’s saying that ‘unless we start now, we’ll have nothing to say in five years time’ because nature takes time to show any kind of benefits”.

Highlighting early operational wins can maintain momentum while longer-term value materialises.



4. BUILD INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY: ENSURE DURABILITY BEYOND INDIVIDUALS

A compelling business case is necessary but not sufficient. A lasting strategy requires people across the organisation to understand their role in it.

Participants highlighted the need for tiered capability development:

SUSTAINABILITY TEAMS require deeper biodiversity literacy and analytical competence

PROCUREMENT AND SOURCING TEAMS require understanding of ecological dependency and supplier engagement.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP requires fluency in risk, governance and long-term resilience implications.

Immersive Learning for Leadership

Experiential learning can accelerate understanding.

As one former luxury-sector leader reflected:

“To address the detachment between a finished project and its origin, we brought a cross-functional team to a farm to see the process first hand. By developing a regenerative pilot, sourcing hides from beef production, we were able to show rather than just tell how a product is actually made. Sometimes you have to put people in the situation to make the reality of biodiversity loss tangible.”

Embedding nature into training, governance processes and decision frameworks reduces dependence on individual champions and increases the likelihood of sustained integration.

5. ITERATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: TREAT STRATEGY AS EVOLVING INFRASTRUCTURE

The business case for nature is not a one-off presentation. It is an evolving strategic capability.

In emerging fields, sequencing matters more than perfection. Regulatory expectations will change. Data quality will improve. Investor scrutiny will intensify.

The consensus in the room was clear: organisations that treat their business case as living infrastructure, documenting assumptions and outcomes, build resilience over time.

Leveraging Incremental Progress and Adapting the Narrative

Several participants emphasised that early efforts rarely provide complete visibility. Initial hotspot mapping, pilot projects or targeted supplier engagement often generate learning that reshapes subsequent analysis and prioritisation.

As one participant noted:

“We didn’t wait for perfect data. We started with what we knew, learned quickly, and adjusted.”

Early initiatives reduce immediate exposure and generate institutional learning. That learning strengthens future investment decisions, governance design and internal positioning.

Normalising Failure and Building Institutional Memory

Participants also described the importance of documenting assumptions, decisions and outcomes. Treating the business case as something that evolves helps the organisation learn and adapt over time.

Pragmatism over Perfection

The objective is not perfection at inception. It is structured progression.

Sustainability teams are encouraged to track progress consistently and communicate achievements in real time. This will ensure that the business case remains credible and grounded in organisational reality rather than remaining an abstract or static document.

CONCLUSION: FROM INITIATIVE TO INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITY

Integrating nature into core decision-making is no longer only about environmental ambition, but also about institutional maturity and resilience.

Across peer discussion at the Nature & Biodiversity Peer Group, one theme was consistent: companies that succeed in this space do not treat nature as a standalone initiative. They embed it into procurement, governance, risk management and capital allocation processes.

Organisations that do not make this shift risk allowing exposure to build in parts of the business that sit outside sustainability's line of sight. Over time, those disconnected risks have a way of resurfacing in operational disruption, cost pressure or regulatory scrutiny.

Ultimately, the difference lies in whether the case changes how decisions are made. A defensible business case for nature links ecological dependency to commercial consequence. It makes clear where the risk sits, why timing matters, and what level of commitment is required. Whether that case takes hold depends on operational follow-through and the ability to embed it into existing decision processes.

This is not primarily a communications challenge. It is about building the capability to make better decisions about risk and resilience.

As regulatory expectations tighten, supply chains face increasing instability and investor attention continues to sharpen, organisations that have built this capability will be able to respond with clarity instead of scrambling to react. Those that have not may find themselves reacting to pressures that are no longer new, but have simply gone unaddressed.

The work is complex. Our intention is not to oversimplify it, but to offer a set of principles that make the starting point clearer and the next step more intentional.

CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE

The Nature & Biodiversity Peer Group was established to provide a neutral forum for senior sustainability leaders to share candidly and learn from one another. Biodiversify now stewards the Group, continuing its role as a trusted convening space for corporate nature strategy. Participation is invitation-led to preserve candour and depth of discussion.

If your organisation is navigating similar questions, we welcome an exploratory conversation about future participation.

[Join the Nature and Biodiversity Peer Group](#)

APPLYING THIS WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION

Every organisation's starting point is different. Translating the principles outlined in this paper into a compelling internal business case requires adapting to your specific governance structure, risk profile and strategic priorities.

Biodiversify works with companies to design defensible nature strategies that align biodiversity science with commercial reality.

To explore how these insights apply within your organisation, you can arrange a short conversation with Dr Samuel Sinclair, who leads Biodiversify's work in corporate nature strategy and stewards the Nature & Biodiversity Peer Group.

[Book a 15-minute discussion](#)

MORE GUIDES IN THIS SERIES

Moving towards a nature-positive future is a journey that goes beyond high-level commitments. This series of guides is designed to help your organisation navigate the path forward, offering the practical frameworks and clear insights needed to turn environmental ambitions into lasting, meaningful change

BEYOND CARBON TUNNEL VISION:

Integrating Climate and Nature

In many companies, carbon and nature have been treated as parallel agendas. This guide examines why integration is now essential for resilience, how siloed approaches create blind spots, and how building nature work on the foundations laid by carbon can enhance business interests on multiple fronts.

FROM AMBITION TO IMPLEMENTATION:

Building Nature Strategies that Deliver

Many organisations have commitments on paper but struggle with delivery. This guide explores the execution gap: impacts and dependencies, traceability, internal champions and strategic clarity.

DATA:

From Paralysis to Decision-Grade Insight

What to measure, what to ignore, and how to prioritise. A lot of companies begin with data that feels too messy or incomplete to be useful. This guide helps clarify what information is necessary, what should be done first, and how frameworks can strengthen methodological credibility without overwhelming organisations.

“True resilience is found where climate and nature meet. This series provides the clarity needed to navigate that intersection with confidence and purpose.”

DR SAM SINCLAIR

PROCUREMENT AS LEVERAGE:

Embedding Nature into Supply Chains

Nature strategy becomes tangible where sourcing decisions are made. Supply chains are at risk if the raw materials companies depend on aren't protected. This guide explores the transparency gap, supplier fatigue, procurement incentives and the shift from pilot projects to embedded action.

LANDSCAPE-LEVEL INTERVENTIONS:

From Fragmented Projects to System Resilience

Commodity-level action alone cannot secure resilience. This final guide examines the move from fragmented supply-chain initiatives to coordinated, landscape-level collaboration and finance models.

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