



BIODIVERSITY | METALS AND MINING

Operationalizing Nature Positive Concepts in Mine Closure

SEPTEMBER 2023

Sustainability is our business

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Introduction

Incorporating natural capital consideration into mine closure can drive corporate value.

The global biodiversity crisis is upon us. Through unprecedented animal and plant species extinction rates, some one million species are currently at risk.¹ We are crossing critical planetary boundaries for climate, land use, biodiversity, and other systems. As a result, the World Economic Forum ranks “biodiversity loss” and “human environmental damage” as among the top risks².

Because businesses both depend and impact this natural capital, risk and opportunities are created. With regards to dependence, more than half of the world’s gross domestic product, US\$44 trillion, is moderately or highly dependent on nature³. On the impact side, land conversion, climate change, and pollution are the most important. Some of the business opportunities needed to provide products and services with lower impact have been estimated at USD 10 trillion through 2030.⁴ On the risk side, two groups are notable:

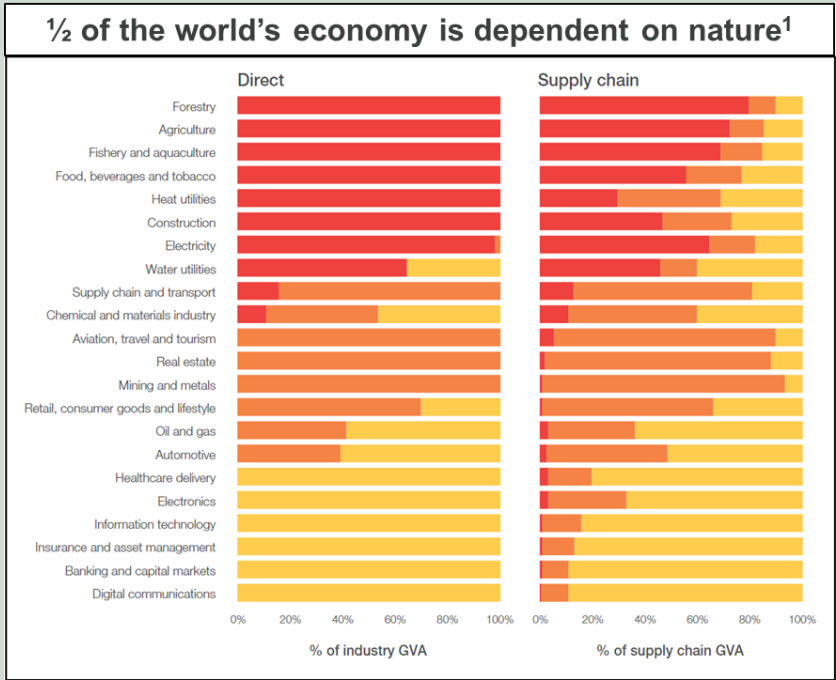
Physical—acute and systemic loss of access to water, raw materials or natural protections against storms

Transition—regulators, customers and communities have ever higher demands for sustainable products and services⁵

Importantly, these risks and opportunities are growing.⁴

Introduction

The signing of the Global Biodiversity Framework in December 2022 has spurred Australia, U.S. and other governments to start returning 30% of ecosystems to nature by 2030. The Taskforce Nature-related Financial Disclosures was launched in September 2023 and disclosure standards (e.g., GRI, CSRD, ISSB) are align their methods with TNFD.

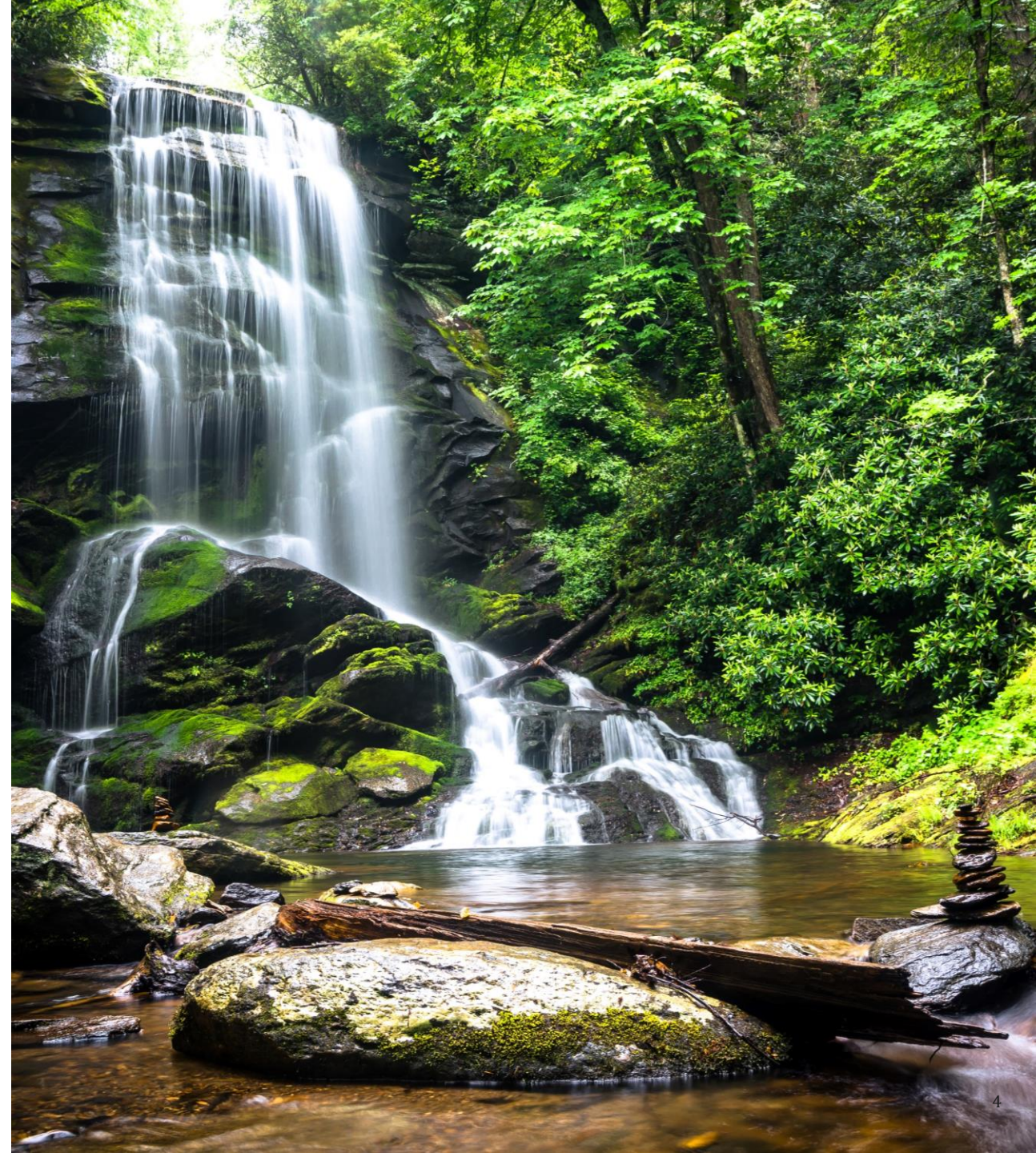


In turn, term “nature positive”
has emerged to capture the need
to halt and reverse the loss of
nature.⁶

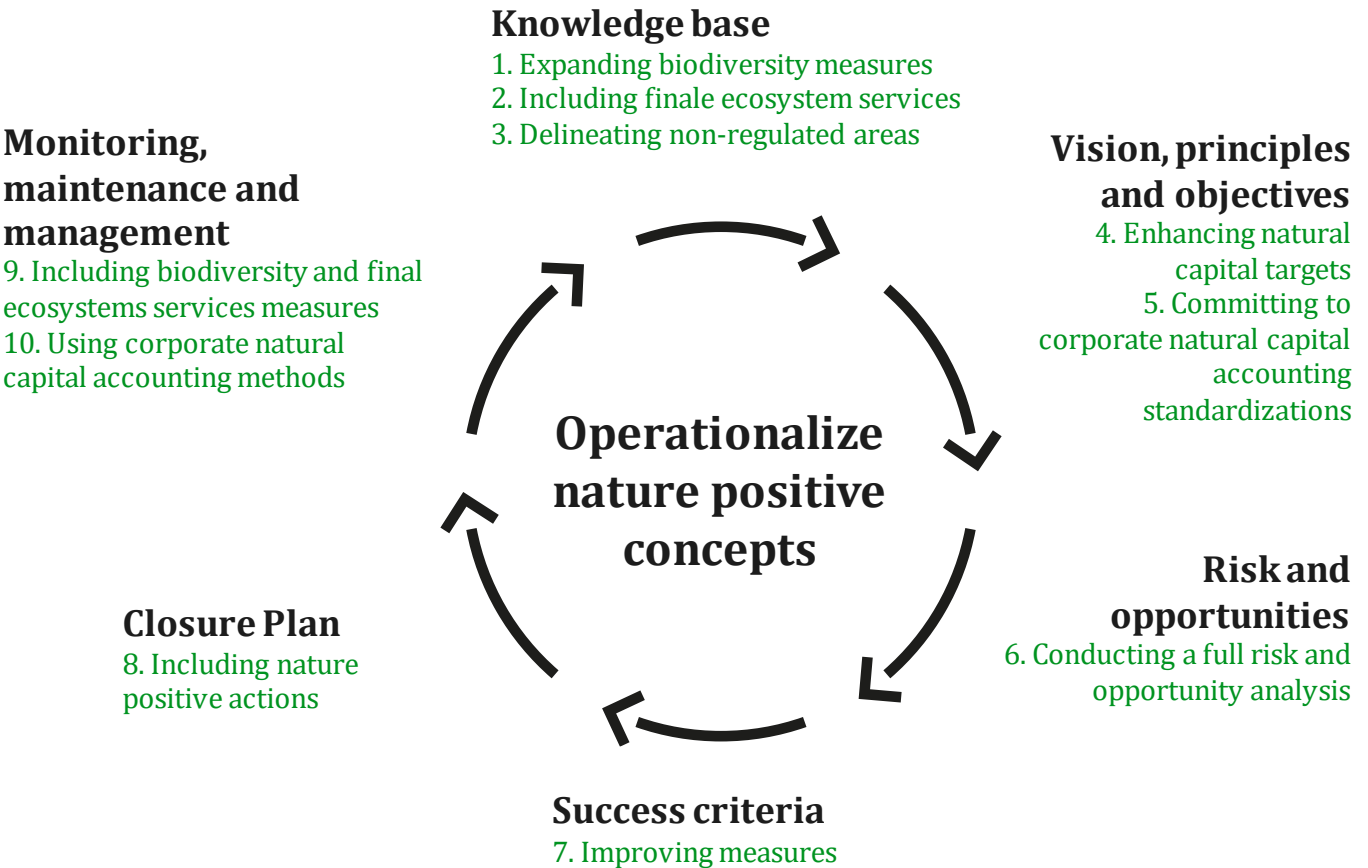
Nature positive

While still evolving, nature positive is understood as aligning with the planetary boundaries, the 30 X 30 goal and the GBF more broadly. It call on corporations to account for the full scope of their impacts, embrace the ecological equivalency principle (like for like, kind for kind), use 'Corporate natural capital accounting' methods and mitigation hierarchy, among other aims. A nature positive mining company would effectively minimize risks and exploit opportunities and the industry has been embracing these nature positive concepts.⁷

However, no guidance exists for integrating nature positive concepts into closure.



Operationalize nature positive concepts



Ten nature positive concepts can be introduced into the six generic steps of closure. They help move mines towards nature positive.

Legend

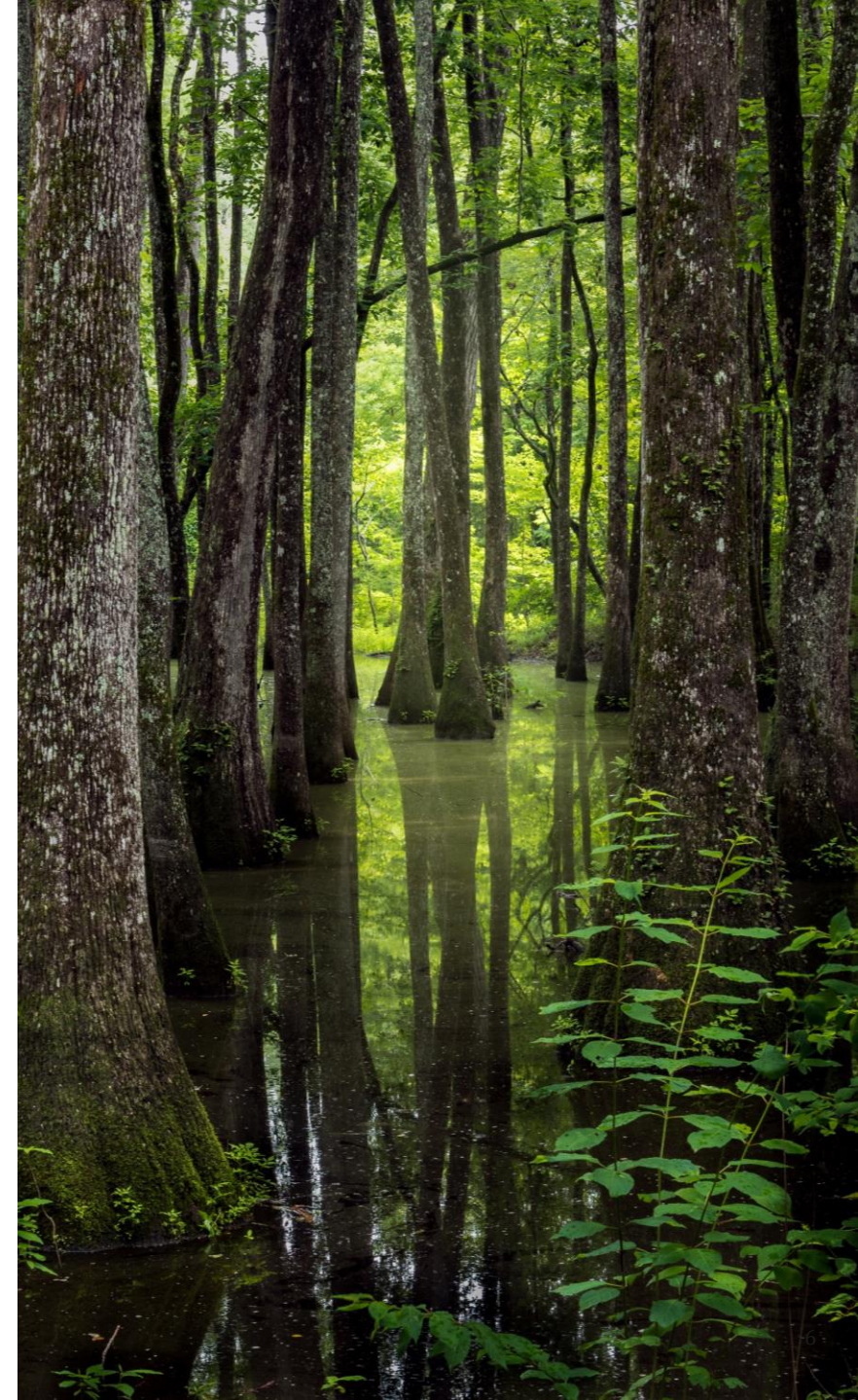
Closure steps in **bold**
Nature positive concepts in green

Operationalize nature positive concepts

1. EXPANDING BIODIVERSITY MEASURES

The knowledge base related to biodiversity measures need to expand so they are aligned with nature positive and corporate natural capital accounting. This includes:

1. Measuring the full scope of nature, not only those aspects required by nature.⁸
2. The mitigation hierarchy must be used and any necessary data must be collected to demonstrate compliance.⁸
3. While not required under definitions of nature positive, corporate natural capital accounting (CNCA) should be considered. These methods yield data that is comparable from site to site, auditable, can be consolidated across a company, among other benefits. Effectively this requires delineating the entire site's ecosystem types, their extent, and their conditions and then using this data to compute the state of the site's ecosystems through condition adjusted hectares.⁸



Operationalize nature positive concepts

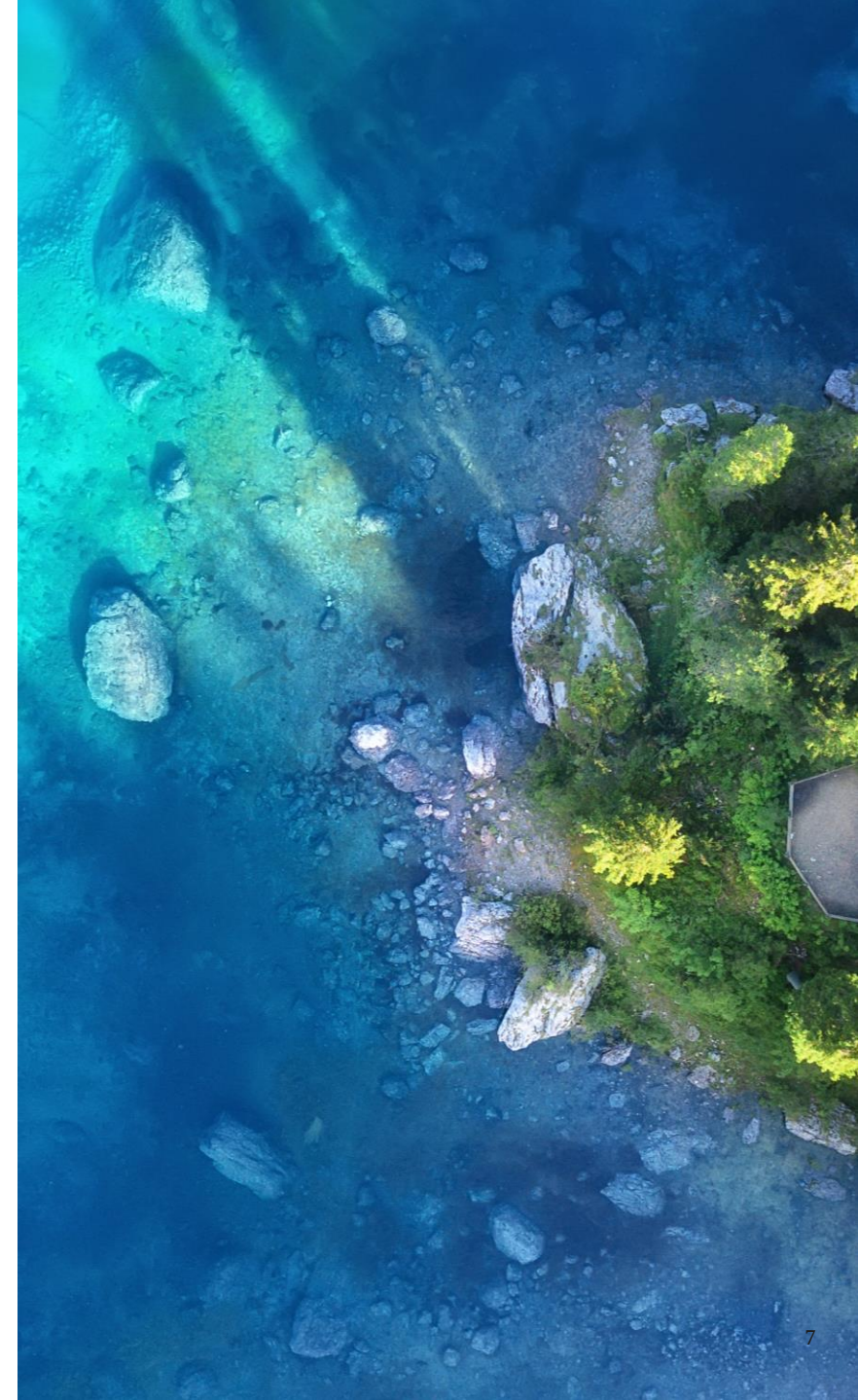
2. INCLUDING FINAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

The knowledge base need to include final ecosystem services—when an ecological end-product transitions from being predominately ecological to being either an economic input or something directly used or appreciated. They provide a way to connect the state of nature with social and economic uses from foraging to hunting to cultural ceremonies. Operationalizing them requires:

1. Understanding how the land has been used
2. Identifying the data required to model those uses
3. Collecting this data

3. DELINEATING NON-REGULATED AREAS

The knowledge based should also delineate areas such as buffer zones that are more likely to qualify for use in environmental markets (e.g., carbon trading, species trading, wetland banking). Hence, they offer revenue opportunities and are likely to form a large part of post closure land use in coming years.



Operationalize nature positive concepts

4. ENHANCING NATURAL CAPITAL TARGETS

Closure's vision, principles and targets need enhanced natural capital targets. For most sites, this equates with net positive or no net loss goals required:

1. They are focused on the state of ecosystem (i.e., extent and quality of ecosystems)
2. Meet the Science Based Targets for nature or other regional or local conservation targets that are consistent with the planetary boundaries.⁹

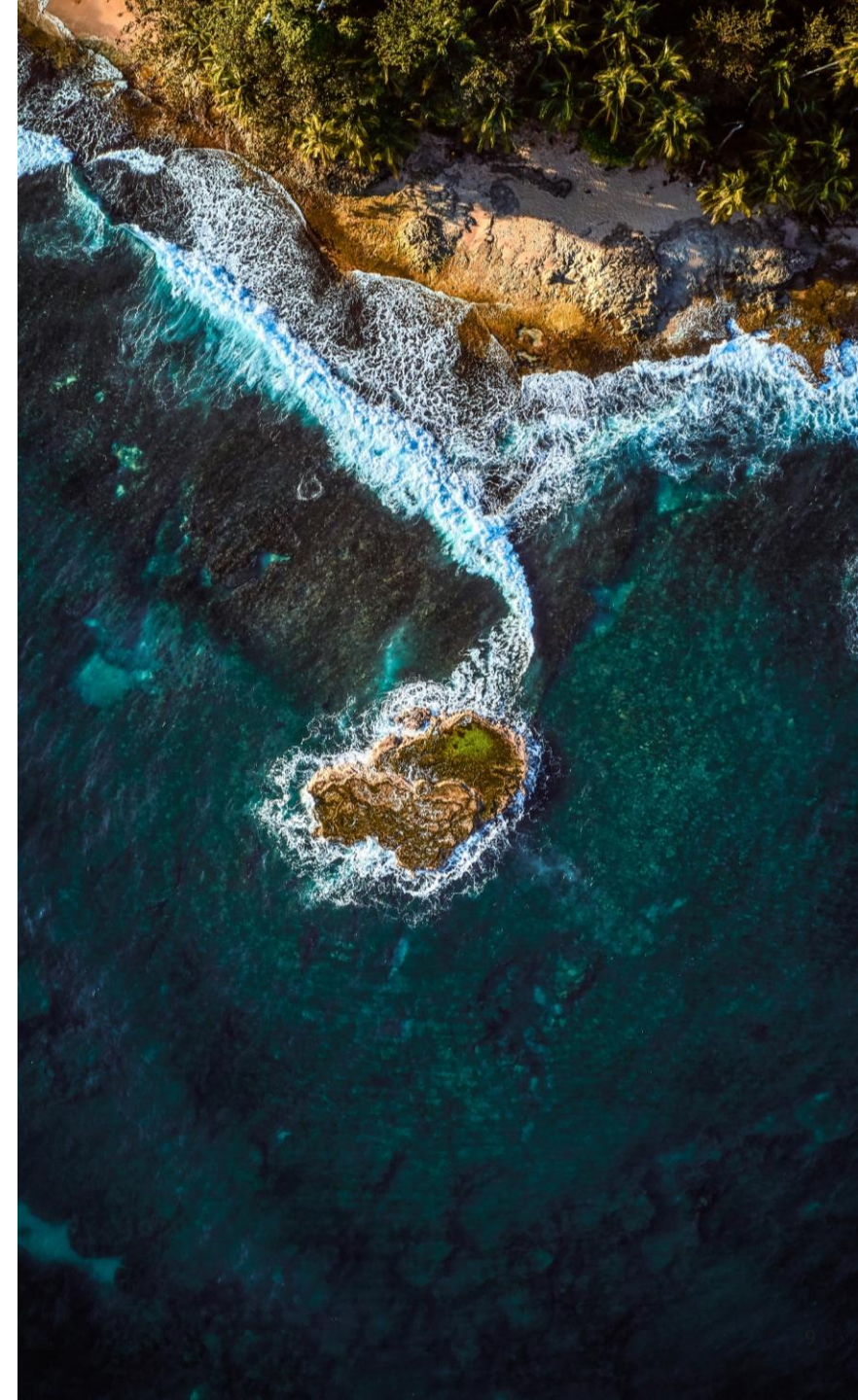


Operationalize nature positive concepts

5. COMMITTING TO CORPORATE NATURAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTING (CNCA) STANDARDIZATIONS

The vision, principles and objects of closure need to embrace CNCA's standardizations. They are:

1. Defining ecosystem as stocks of natural capital
2. Developing 'asset registers of stocks'
3. Measure changes using appropriate methods
4. Employing recording rules and journal entries
5. Building statements of performance and position
6. Measure both accumulated and periodic changes¹⁰



Operationalize nature positive concepts

6. CONDUCTING A FULL RISK AND OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Conducting a full risk and opportunity analysis related to natural capital helps ensure that not only are all material issues covered, but that the rationale for a specific nature positive action is thoroughly justified. Key guides for conducting this analysis include TNFD and Science Based Targets for nature.

7. IMPROVING NATURAL CAPITAL MEASURES

Success criteria also needs to improve so that it measures:

1. Include the full scope of nature (see step 1)
2. Collect data to demonstrate compliance with the mitigation hierarchy (see step 1)
3. Corporate natural capital accounting (see step 1)
4. Final ecosystem services (see step 2)
5. Be focused on the state of nature
6. Be aligned with the SBTs for nature or local measures/goals that are aligned with the planetary boundaries



Operationalize nature positive concepts

8. INCLUDING NATURE POSITIVE ACTIONS

Closure plans need to include nature positive actions (e.g., ecosystem restoration, environmental markets) need to be imbedded in closure planning. These should undergo the same screening and other projects, but also consider the co-benefits from biodiversity restoration (e.g., revenue from a carbon market, reduce downstream flooding and provide foraging opportunities).

9. INCLUDING BIODIVERSITY AND FINAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES MEASURES IN MONITORING PROGRAMS

Monitoring, maintenance and management programs need to expand their understanding of biodiversity (see concept 7 above) and include final ecosystem services (see concept 2 above).

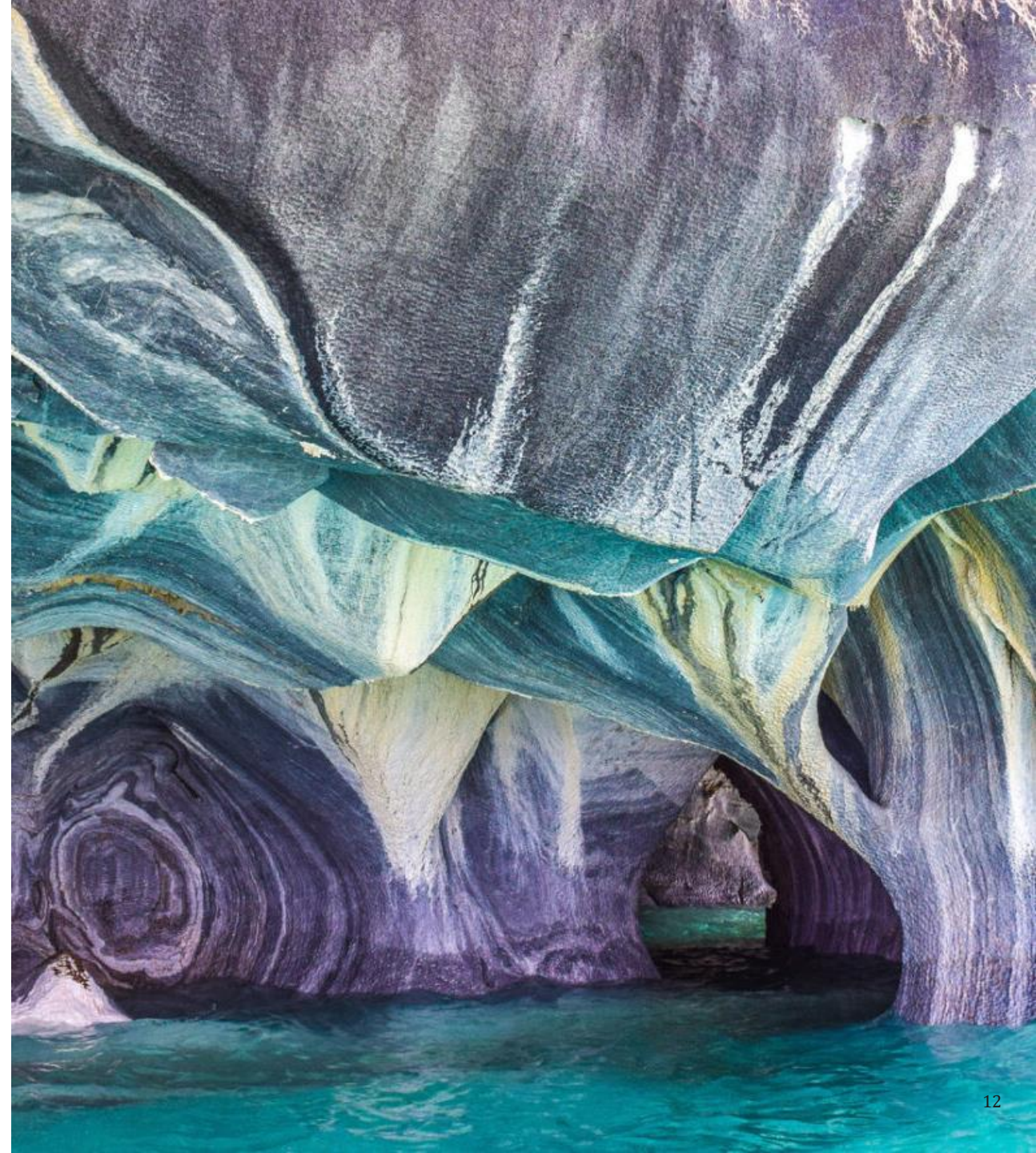
10. USING CORPORATE NATURAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTING (CNCA) METHODS

Monitoring, maintenance and management programs need to use methods from CNCA (see concept 5 above).



Final thoughts

In implementing these steps as part of closure, companies should gain a fuller and clearer understanding of their site's nature related risks and opportunities, create more advanced targets, build stronger strategies for achieving them and create new revenue opportunities (most commonly these revenue opportunities are in environmental markets). Exploring these market opportunities could be the easiest route to integrating nature positive concepts into closure planning. Not only should markets have broad interest within companies, but the measurement methods used for many markets align with CNCA.



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Thank you

If further information is required, please contact:

John Finisdore
Principal Consultant
ERM NA

John.Finisdore@erm.com

Simon Tillotson
Partner
ERM EMEA

Simon.Tillotson@erm.com

Roberta Pedlar-Hobbs
Partner
ERM NA

roberta.pedlar-hobbs@erm.com

Chris Gimber
Partner
ERM APAC

Chris.Gimber@erm.com

Ricardo Camargo
Partner
ERM LAC

Ricardo.Camargo@erm.com

Paul Hesketh
Global Mine Closure Lead
ERM EMEA

Paul.Hesketh@erm.com