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Towards a nature-positive future in development co-operation

This document presents the development co-operation towards a nature-positive future, following its declassification by the DAC ENVIRONET on 18 September.

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Abstract

This paper analyses the emergence of the “nature-positive” concept and discusses the rationale for its use in the context of development co-operation. Drawing on the results of an exploratory analysis of how providers currently contribute to the concept through their development finance activities, the paper considers preliminary policy implications for providers committed to contribute to a nature-positive future, aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AFD	Agence française de développement (French Development Agency)
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance Initiative
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KMGBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
LDC	Least Developed Country
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODF	Official Development Finance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

UK	United Kingdom
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD	United States Dollar

Foreword

Nature is the foundation of sustainable development, supporting food systems, water security, livelihoods, health and climate stability. Yet natural systems are under growing pressure from land conversion, pollution, overexploitation and climate change, leading to widespread biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. In response, the concept of a nature-positive future has gained global momentum and the global Nature Positive Initiative calls for action to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 and to foster the recovery of ecosystems and the services they provide by 2050. For development co-operation, this agenda offers an opportunity to embed nature more centrally into efforts to reduce poverty, promote resilience and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Many developing countries face complex and interconnected challenges in achieving a nature-positive transition, including limited fiscal space, capacity constraints and competing demands on land and natural resources. Development co-operation providers can play a key enabling role by aligning their policies, investments and partnerships with nature-positive principles. This means not only minimising harm to nature, but actively supporting its restoration, sustainable use and long-term stewardship.

This paper aims to deepen the understanding of what “nature-positive” means in a development co-operation context and how providers can operationalise it. It supports development actors in scaling up effective, measurable action that delivers benefits for nature, people and climate. In doing so, the paper also contributes to the implementation of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) *Declaration on aligning development co-operation with the objectives of the Paris Agreement*, by addressing the interdependence of climate and biodiversity action. The analysis draws on consultations with members of the DAC, two expert workshops held in 2023, and qualitative and quantitative research that includes a novel methodology to assess how overall development finance may contribute to nature-related objectives.

Section 1 defines the concept of nature-positive and explores its emergence in international policy and its relevance to development co-operation. It introduces a framework that providers can use to interpret and apply nature-positive principles in their strategies and programming.

Section 2 reviews the current uptake of nature-positive thinking and practices among development providers, including an assessment of provider commitments and a stock-take of activities viewed through a nature-positive lens.

Section 3 outlines policy considerations for providers willing to take a nature-positive approach, highlighting opportunities and challenges, and proposes a pragmatic way forward.

The findings and recommendations of this paper aim to inform the efforts of development co-operation providers in making nature-positive a practical and credible part of their work. While grounded in the experience of DAC members, the paper is also intended to inform other providers of development co-operation, including multilateral institutions, South-South and triangular co-operation actors, as well as philanthropic organisations seeking to align with a global vision of a nature-positive future.

Executive Summary

The nature-positive concept emerged in the lead-up to the Convention on Biological Diversity's 15th Conference of the Parties in 2020. Nature-positive is an evolving concept and is not explicitly set out in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). The approaches discussed in this paper are exploratory and do not constitute agreed commitments or standards for DAC members. Their applicability will depend on providers' respective mandates, policy frameworks, capacities and partner-country circumstances. Nature-positive shares the same mission and vision of the KMGBF: to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and to achieve full recovery of biodiversity by 2050. In essence, nature-positive is broadly understood as a commitment to align with the KMGBF's goals and targets – yet the concept provides a clear, outcome-oriented vision (similar to "net zero" for climate) that can galvanise cross-sector action, enhance policy coherence and communicate ambition in a way that resonates with a wide range of stakeholders, including those beyond the biodiversity community.

The research, consultations and statistical analysis conducted for this paper found that DAC members are increasingly embracing nature-positive as an approach. However, official development finance mostly targets sectors that are neutral to nature, while a significant share of their activities potentially place nature at risk and relatively fewer activities target positive outcomes for nature. Indeed, in 2022 roughly 8% of total official development finance from DAC members could be considered as having nature as a primary or secondary objective, and thus potentially contributing positively to nature. By contrast, about 65% of finance was classified as nature-residual, having no direct effect (positive or negative) on nature; and around 20% was in nature-at-risk areas that could harm nature if not properly managed.

The imbalance between DAC member visions on nature-positive and the types of activities financed present a significant barrier to achieving the KMGBF. Redressing this imbalance is far from being an easy task. The nature-positive concept aims at net gains in biodiversity across the board, which is challenging to implement in practice. Key barriers include limited data and metrics to measure and track 'net gain', which come on top of other persistent challenges that undermine biodiversity action overall. Moreover, partner countries are still in the early stages of operationalising the concept. While there is growing recognition of the need to scale up nature-positive activities, the paper also concludes that there may be limitations, and even a degree of tension, for development co-operation, given that its objective to support developing countries in their development process requires investments in sectors and infrastructure that invariably can harm nature. Consequently, the characteristics of a nature-positive development pathway are still to be defined, as well as the practical boundaries of nature-positive in a developing country context, which would help understand the broader implications for development co-operation.

Preliminary policy implications and way forward

The analysis, consultations and research conducted for this paper lead to several preliminary policy implications on what achieving a nature-positive future means for development co-operation, including:

- Scaling up nature-focused activities, e.g. conservation and ecosystem restoration projects, as well as activities with a positive impact on nature (e.g. pollution abatement, sustainable forestry and fisheries, agroecology). While biodiversity conservation remains central, nature-positive implies a wider set of actions that contribute to regenerating and sustaining nature, even beyond protected areas or species-focused interventions. These activities currently represent a small share of development finance and could increase to effectively support a nature-positive future.
- Addressing current underfunding for biodiversity from all sources is critical to meet the KMGBF – but this is only one aspect of the broader challenge. A nature-positive approach recognises and leverages a wider set of policy and financial levers, as for example supporting partner countries to for instance reduce harmful subsidies or pursue innovative fiscal or debt instruments. While individually these actions may involve relatively modest financial flows, they can generate system-wide impacts that support more ambitious and integrated nature-positive outcomes in partner countries.
- Ensuring that mainstreamed activities do no harm so that projects in any sector incorporate nature-related goals, avoid negative impacts and aim for *no net loss* for nature. Nature-positive approaches encourage efforts to generate, where possible, net gains. This not only involves rigorously applying environmental safeguards and the mitigation hierarchy across provider activities, but also proactively designing projects that restore, regenerate or enhance ecosystems, turning nature into a driver (and not just a constraint) of development outcomes.
- Identifying opportunities in low-focus sectors (e.g. health, education), to unlock untapped potential for biodiversity mainstreaming. Nature-positive approaches encourage innovative, cross-sectoral partnerships that link these sectors with biodiversity outcomes – rather than treating biodiversity as the domain of only a few sectors. In turn, this approach promotes integrated solutions that can generate net gains for nature (e.g. nature-based health interventions, green school infrastructure), expanding the reach and impact of development co-operation.
- Assessing interventions with residual or indirect impacts on nature (e.g. capacity development, general budget support) can help identify hidden potential for nature-positive outcomes. These types of interventions are not typically designed with nature in mind but form a large share of provider's portfolios. A nature-positive approach helps steer such interventions toward net positive outcomes for nature (e.g. integrating ecosystem considerations into policy or governance work).
- Together, nature-related and nature-residual activities represent the portion of provider activities that could form the basis of a future nature-positive strategy for DAC members. A nature-positive approach thus helps connect direct and indirect contributions to nature, enabling amore holistic and proactive use of development finance.
- Scrutinising nature-at-risk activities (e.g. infrastructure or resource extraction projects). Nature-positive aims to avoid harm and seeks to transform high-risk interventions into opportunities for restoration or regeneration. Development co-operation providers could reinforce safeguard policies, screening tools, and due diligence processes to avoid harm and, where feasible, turn would-be harmful projects into ones that leave a net positive legacy for nature.

Moving forward, development co-operation providers may need more comprehensive tracking systems to monitor how nature is integrated into their activities. Establishing such systems is essential to define baselines, measure progress, identify gaps and ensure that provider activities are aligned with nature-positive objectives. Improving transparency and reporting mechanisms will enable providers to adapt their strategies over time, ensuring that nature considerations drive long-term development co-operation planning and that commitments to nature-positive outcomes are translated into measurable, accountable results. In the meantime, providers may aspire to a nature-positive future, invest in capacity development and policy alignment in partner countries – notably to understand the practical limits of the concept in a developing country context and help partner countries identify nature-positive pathways. Ultimately,

embracing a nature-positive vision offers a pathway for development co-operation to not only mitigate environmental harm but actively drive ecological regeneration, reinforcing the foundation for sustainable and resilient development worldwide.

1 “Nature-positive” provides the basis for sustainability of development co-operation

There is growing momentum, including among development co-operation providers, regarding the concept of nature-positive (Nature Positive Initiative, 2023^[1]). This paper seeks to clarify the meaning, added value and implications of this concept for development co-operation. Without a clear understanding of what ‘nature-positive’ means, the increasing use of the term has considerable risk of confusion and greenwashing, yet it holds relevance and potential for development co-operation. This chapter clarifies what the nature-positive concept means, how it has been defined by various stakeholders and how development co-operation providers can operationalise it.

The nature-positive concept emerged with the KMGBF

The term nature-positive emerged in 2020, during the lead-up to negotiations of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) (Locke et al., 2020^[2]). While the KMGBF itself does not use the term, it embodies the same vision and mission, namely to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and to put nature on a path to recovery from previous losses by 2050 (Nature positive, n.d.^[3]). At the same time, nature-positive goes beyond the KMGBF in that it provides a succinct, overarching goal to address multiple dimensions of nature (including biodiversity), similar to how ‘net zero’ encapsulates climate goals. Since 2020, the definition and scope of nature-positive have continued to evolve, gaining political momentum from stakeholders, including among governments, academia, civil society, standard setters and the private sector (WEF, 2020^[4]). While a broad consensus on its meaning is forming (Nature Positive Initiative, 2023^[1]), different organisations and stakeholders have framed the concept in various ways – incorporating different elements such as what “nature” encompasses, specific targets and dates, baseline years and action strategies (see Table 1.1 for selected definitions).

Table 1.1. Selected descriptions and definitions of nature-positive

Institution	Description or definition of ‘nature-positive’
Global goal for nature	Zero Net Loss of Nature from 2020, Net Positive by 2030, and Full Recovery by 2050 (Locke et al., 2020 ^[2]).
IUCN	“A nature-positive future means that we, as a global society, halt and reverse the loss of nature measured from its current status, reducing future negative impacts alongside restoring and renewing nature, to put both living and non-living nature measurably on the path to recovery” (IUCN, 2022 ^[5]).
UNEP	“A Nature-positive Economy [is] an economy that is regenerative, collaborative and where growth is only valued where it contributes to social progress and environmental protection” [reference].
World Economic Forum	“Nature-positive means enhancing the resilience of our planet and societies to halt and reverse nature loss” (WEF, 2020 ^[6]).

Science-based targets network	A nature-positive goal should include: collective abatement of pressures and no net loss of nature from 2020; halted decline in the abundance, diversity and resilience of species and of ecosystems by 2030; and, visible and sustained improvement in species, populations and ecosystems by 2050 (SBTN, 2021 ^[7]).
Natural England and UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee	Becoming Nature-positive by 2030 means reversing the current decline of biodiversity so that ecosystem restoration is underway and species are increasing in abundance and fewer are threatened with extinction. This is a critical step on the way to thriving nature by 2050 (Brotherton et al., 2021 ^[8]).
Nature-positive Universities network	"Nature-positive means restoring species and ecosystems that have been harmed by the impacts of a university and its activities and enhancing the university's positive impacts on nature" (Nature-positive Universities Network, 2022 ^[9]).
Inter-American Development Bank	"Nature-positive investments are financial resources committed to activities which explicitly and measurably maintain or enhance the integrity of ecosystems against a defined baseline - or create the enabling conditions for doing so" (Trinomics B.V & Climate Policy Initiative, 2022 ^[10]).
Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures	"A high-level goal and concept describing a future state of nature (e.g. biodiversity, ecosystem services and natural capital), which is greater than the current state" (TNFD, n.d. ^[11]).
University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership	"Nature-positive means halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030 so that species and ecosystems begin to recover. It is a new operating model based on regeneration, resilience and circularity not extraction, destruction and pollution. A nature-positive economy is one in which businesses, governments and others take action at scale to reduce and remove the drivers and pressures fueling the degradation of nature, and work to actively improve the state of nature and the ecosystem services it provides" (University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, 2022 ^[12]).
G7 Ministers' Meeting on Climate, Energy and Environment Communiqué, Sapporo, April 2023	"We will employ a nature-positive approach, that prevents biodiversity loss and supports nature conservation with the aim at delivering net-positive benefits to the natural environment" (G7, 2023 ^[13]).
Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL)	PBL explores what nature-positive pathways mean in three specific configurations of societal actors and nature: rural landscapes, supply chains, and cities (PBL, 2022 ^[14]).
Government of the UK	The UK Nature Positive 2030 report suggests that achieving the nature-positive objective by 2030 means reversing current biodiversity decline so that ecosystem restoration is underway, species populations are increasing in abundance and fewer are threatened with extinction. This is considered a critical step on the way to thriving nature by 2050 (Government of the UK, 2023 ^[15]).
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research	The CGIAR Initiative on Nature-Positive Solutions aims to re-imagine, co-create and implement nature-positive solutions-based agri-food systems that equitably support food and livelihoods while ensuring that agriculture is a net positive contributor to biodiversity and nature. Nature-positive food systems are regenerative, non-depleting and non-destructive in their use of natural resources (CGIAR, n.d. ^[16]).
MDB Common Principles for tracking nature-positive finance	Nature-positive finance refers to finance that supports actions that protect, restore or enhance sustainable use and management of nature, or enables these actions, contributing to the implementation of the KMGBF and its broad ambition to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, with a view to full recovery by 2050 (MDBs, 2023 ^[17]). MDBs have significantly advanced their work on conceptualizing both nature and nature-positive finance. Since then, MDBs have significantly advanced their work on conceptualising both nature and nature-positive finance. This work includes, most importantly, the <i>MDB Common Nature Finance Taxonomy</i> (World Bank, 2025 ^[18]) that defines a reference list of activities that qualify as nature / nature-positive finance; a new set of <i>MDB Common Principles for Tracking Nature Finance</i> launched at UNFCCC COP30 (MDBs, 2025 ^[19]) and a Practitioner's Guide on nature(-positive) finance (IADB, 2025 ^[20]).
Business for Nature	Does not define nature-positive, but outlines a process to achieve nature-positive outcomes via a process of "assess, commit, act, advocate" (Business for Nature, 2021 ^[21]).
World Business Council for Sustainable Development	Does not define nature-positive, but outlines a process to achieve nature-positive outcomes via the procedural building blocks of "assess and prioritise, commit, measure and value, act, transform, disclose and report" (WBCSD, 2021 ^[22]).
Nature Positive Initiative	Nature Positive is a global societal goal defined as 'Halt and Reverse Nature Loss by 2030 on a 2020 baseline, and achieve full recovery by 2050 (Nature Positive Initiative, 2023 ^[1]).

Note: Nature-proofing official development assistance (ODA) refers to ensuring that ODA does not contribute to biodiversity loss and ideally enhances nature outcomes. Nature-positive infrastructure are projects designed with ecological enhancement as a core objective.

Source: Adapted from (zu Ermgassen et al., 2022^[23]; zu Ermgassen et al., 2023^[24]) and authors.

Key differences among the definitions of Table 1.1 include:

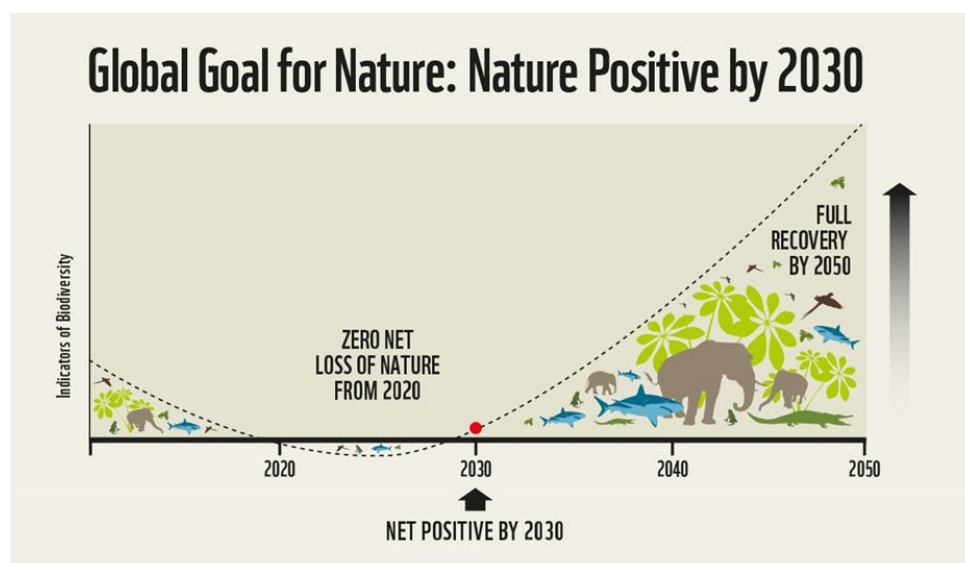
- Biodiversity vs. nature: Some stakeholders conflate *biodiversity* with *nature*, while others define nature more broadly to include non-living (abiotic) components like air, water, soil and minerals.

- Holistic vs. specific goals: Some view nature-positive as a succinct, overarching goal addressing multiple dimensions of nature (including biodiversity, ecosystems, etc.), while others propose more narrowly focused targets or definitions.
- People's well-being: Some definitions explicitly link nature-positive to human well-being and sustainable development, whereas others treat nature-positive purely in ecological terms.
- Timeframes and accountability: Some interpretations emphasise clear timeframes, progress tracking and public reporting. Others debate how to define impact boundaries for accountability (e.g. activities or geographic areas that an institution is responsible for when measuring “net gain”).

These differences point at the various elements that underpinned the international debate and discussions that followed the emergence of nature-positive. Despite partly differing interpretations, all definitions share a common core idea: achieving quantifiable net gains for biodiversity relative to a fixed baseline. In other words, *more nature in the future* compared to today. For example, the Nature-Positive Initiative – a coalition of research and conservation organisations – defines *nature-positive* as a global goal to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 (using 2020 as the baseline year) and achieve full recovery of nature by 2050 (Nature positive, n.d.^[25]). This implies not only preventing further biodiversity loss, but actively improving the state of nature, so that ecosystems and species are in a better state than they were at the baseline. Importantly, the KMGBF's vision and mission aligns closely with this definition. However, the nature-positive concept adds value by providing a unifying, outcome-oriented narrative that can mobilise actors beyond the biodiversity community, including the private sector and finance, much like “net zero” has done in the climate space. It encourages a systemic shift across sectors and scales, reframing nature as an asset to be restored and enhanced (not just protected) thereby enabling more ambitious, integrated and measurable action toward the goals of the KMGBF.

The concept is often illustrated by a simple trajectory graph (Figure 1.1) showing the global state of biodiversity declining up to the present and then improving from 2020 onward, with net gains by 2030 and full recovery by 2050. In practical terms, measuring progress toward a nature-positive future will require tracking a variety of indicators at different scales – depicted here along the y-axis of Figure 1.1. These include ecosystem-level metrics (e.g. habitat extent and integrity, species abundance and extinction risk, genetic diversity) and indicators of ecosystem services or processes (e.g. rates of pollination, carbon sequestration, water purification). Stakeholders globally are working to establish a set of such indicators in the context of the KMGBF (and its global monitoring framework) and other related initiatives, including the Nature-Positive Initiative. The x-axis of Figure 1.1 highlights the three key temporal milestones of the Nature-Positive Global Goal for Nature: zero net loss of nature from 2030, progressive net gains relative to the 2020 baseline and full recovery by 2050.

Figure 1.1. Global Goal for Nature: Nature-positive by 2030



Source: (Nature positive, n.d.^[3]).

From vision to action: operationalising nature-positive

Translating the previous, high-level nature-positive concept into action is challenging for all stakeholders. Development co-operation providers, the focus of this paper, would also face difficulties in the operationalisation process, not least because they deal with developing countries and the concept would need to be embedded within the development process. Drawing on emerging guidance from international initiatives (UN, 2022^[26]) and (Milner-Gulland, 2022^[27]), providers would need to consider several steps (elaborated in Chapter 3) that encompass, inter alia, (a) adapting the global nature-positive vision into their operations; (b) fitting activities to match the nature-positive (and KMGBF) timeframe; (c) establishing baselines to help measure net gain; (d) developing concrete actions that contribute to nature, especially in areas that go beyond typical biodiversity programming; and (e) adapting existing monitoring and evaluation tools to consider nature-positive.

Operationalising nature-positive in development co-operation may require significant effort and transformation within institutions. Nature-positive can provide a transformative vision for development co-operation providers, but implementing it will inevitably involve trade-offs and require new ways of working. Providers may transition in how they interpret and apply the concept, for instance, starting with broad aspirational (conceptual) commitments, then setting concrete targets or developing pilot activities that can be gradually scaled up (outcome-based) and eventually embedding new processes and metrics (process-based) as their capacity on the subject grows (zu Ermgassen et al., 2023^[24]).¹ Given the rapid emergence of the nature-positive agenda, there is also a strong need for collective agreement on guiding principles to maintain momentum and avoid dilution of ambition or greenwashing. Establishing clear and common principles (for example, on what constitutes a nature-positive investment, how to measure net gain and how to handle trade-offs) could help ensure that development co-operation efforts contribute effectively and credibly to nature-positive outcomes, in line with the KMGBF. The next chapter looks at the current

¹ This builds on a framework by (zu Ermgassen et al., 2023^[24]), which looks at the conceptual, outcome-based and process-based characteristics of nature-positive.

uptake across members of the OECD DAC and other providers, and looks at how the concept could be applied to actual development finance trends from DAC members.

2 Development co-operation providers are embracing nature-positive, but more concrete action is required

Despite the growing international momentum around nature-positive, the starting point for providers of development co-operation is a disconnect between recent high-level commitments on the subject and the actual reality of development co-operation activities. Many development co-operation providers have endorsed the idea of nature-positive in principle, but few have fully integrated the concept into their policies and programming. In practice, providers appear to vary in how they interpret and apply nature-positive. A consultation with DAC members found that while most members support the vision of nature-positive, they are still in the very early stages of operationalising those goals – and in some cases, the concept is unlikely to be taken up given how challenging nature-positive is to put in practice. In short, the use of the term may be ahead of concrete action.

This chapter looks at the current uptake among providers and examines how development co-operation activities align with nature-positive objectives today, based on an exploratory statistical analysis.

The interplay between alignment with the KMGBF and nature-positive

For development co-operation providers, aligning with the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) offers a structured, internationally agreed pathway to contribute to halting and reversing biodiversity loss (OECD, 2026^[28]). The KMGBF sets measurable targets and goals for the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of biodiversity by 2030; and it includes enabling conditions such as finance, capacity development and inclusive governance (CBD, 2022^[29]). Alignment with the KMGBF allows providers to integrate biodiversity considerations into development planning and finance in a way that is transparent, country-owned and harmonised with global objectives. It provides a common reference for mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors, ensuring accountability and supporting national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs). For providers, KMGBF alignment is a practical mechanism to embed biodiversity into broader development agendas, especially when paired with climate action, poverty reduction and resilience building.

While KMGBF alignment and “nature-positive” approaches are closely linked, they are not entirely synonymous. Achieving the KMGBF’s goals and targets would significantly advance the global transition toward a nature-positive world, but the concept of nature-positive goes beyond compliance and it implies a transformative shift in how societies and economies interact with nature. Nature-positive is a broader vision that emphasises not only halting loss but restoring ecosystems, regenerating natural capital and achieving net gains for biodiversity across the board. For providers, as will be seen, this means moving

beyond risk mitigation and toward investments that deliver co-benefits for nature, climate and people beyond the usual biodiversity and environment policy domains. In this sense, KMGBF alignment provides the foundation and measurable benchmarks, while a nature-positive approach can represent the overarching ambition and framing for comprehensive, transformative and integrated development co-operation.

Provider commitments on nature-positive are emerging but remain vague

DAC members often oscillate between using nature-positive as a general aspirational concept and attempting to tie it to specific targets (zu Ermgassen et al., 2023^[24]). Some see nature-positive as a broad, aspirational goal, while others focus on specific, measurable biodiversity outcomes – all coherent with the process of aligning with the KMGBF. Box 2.1 illustrates the variety of interpretations among providers. For example, some consider that nature-positive refers just to biodiversity, others broaden it to other environmental issues, notably climate change. For example, France's AFD explicitly links climate change and biodiversity goals under a nature-positive approach (AFD, 2022^[30]); and the UK aims to 'nature-proof' its official development assistance, as a first step towards being a 'nature-positive' provider, across five categories: waste efficiency, pollution, land degradation, biodiversity and water resources (Government of the UK, 2022^[31]). Australia also hosted a Global Nature Positive Summit in Sydney, 2024, to support the establishment of nature positive economies and to accelerate collective action to drive investment in nature (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 2024^[32]). Beyond the DAC, the Inter-American Development Bank considers that nature-positive activities maintain or enhance the integrity of ecosystems, or enable the conditions to do so (IADB, 2022^[33]).

Box 2.1. Provider commitments and references on nature-positive in development co-operation

At the high-level, many governments referred to nature-positive transitions or economy in international statements (G7 Cornwall UK, 2021^[34]; OECD, 2022^[35]; G7, 2023^[13]). Further, several provider governments and multilateral institutions have committed to becoming nature-positive in the context of development co-operation.

Commitments by several providers

- The *OECD DAC Declaration on a new approach to align development co-operation with the goals of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change* recognises “the urgent need to support investments in adaptation and resilience that are nature-positive, locally-led, inclusive, transparent and gender-responsive” (OECD, 2021^[36]).
- The *Joint Provider Statement on International Finance for Nature and Biodiversity* (Joint Donor Statement, 2022^[37]), launched at CBD COP15 in 2022, commits 14 bilateral providers to “delivering on the goal of halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030 (...) by seizing the opportunities from nature-positive investment”; and to “ensure that development assistance does no harm to nature, and that it becomes ‘nature-positive’ overall”. “This means avoiding, reducing, or mitigating nature-related risks and impacts, including to natural capital accounts at project level and portfolio level; supporting recipient countries in their transition to a net-zero nature-positive economy; and increasing finance for projects aligned with this mission”.
- The *10 Point Plan for financing biodiversity*, aims, inter alia, to ensure that development finance delivers nature-positive outcomes by 2030 (Government of the UK, 2023^[38]). The Plan has been endorsed by 41 countries and institutions, including several DAC members

who “commit to align financial systems and our economies with pathways to become climate-neutral, nature-positive, resilient and less polluting” and to provide nature-positive incentives (Government of the UK, 2023^[38]).

- The 2023 Meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial Level and its Ministerial Council Statement calls the members of the OECD DAC to work to develop a common understanding of nature-positive ODA and alignment with the KMGBF (OECD, 2023^[39]).

Provider commitments or references

- Australia is committed to protecting biodiversity and achieving a nature-positive world (Australian Government, 2022^[40]; Australian Government, 2023^[41]). Australia proposed, but did not legislate, a definition of nature-positive as part of its environmental law reforms. The definition proposed was an improvement in the diversity, abundance, resilience and integrity of ecosystems from a baseline.
- Canada’s development co-operation policy includes Environment and Climate Action as one of its six priorities, which includes a path to action that calls to invest in low-carbon, climate-resilient and nature-positive economies (Government of Canada, 2017^[42]). Canada has also performed a nature-positive screening to its climate finance portfolio. Further, in its 2022 announcements to protect biodiversity in developing countries, Canada pledged to support BIOFIN through, inter alia, climate nature-positive finance solutions and improved biodiversity management in developing countries, including on gender equality (Government of Canada, 2022^[43]). Finally, Canada’s support to IFAD has helped accelerate action on food system solutions for nature-positive climate change mitigation.
- France’s AFD Group aims to be a nature-positive development bank. AFD has developed a biodiversity roadmap for 2019-22 with two main targets: (i) build the Group’s financial contribution towards biodiversity to reach EUR 1 billion by 2025; and (ii) ensure that 30% of the Group’s climate finance is nature-positive (AFD, 2022^[30]).
- Germany uses the concept of nature-positive to support partner countries recoveries (IKI, 2022^[44]). A nature-positive recovery is an economic stimulus programme that aims to achieve economic, social and ecological goals through measures (such as NbS) that have a positive effect on the protection, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity. Criteria for nature-positive recovery include: avoiding negative effects on nature; contributing to the conservation, sustainable management or restoration of biodiversity; improving livelihoods and resilience of people and nature, and contributing to social participation and a just transition to a climate-neutral economy. Germany has piloted the nature-positive recovery concept in Indonesia and Costa Rica, and in supporting supply chains (IKI, n.d.^[45]; IKI, 2023^[46]; IKI, 2022^[47]).
- The UK committed to investing in nature and a nature-positive economy (Government of the UK, 2021^[48]). Its *Strategy on International Development* aims at ensuring that all new UK bilateral development finance does no harm to nature and becomes ‘nature-positive’, aligning with the international goal to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and the KMGBF (Government of the UK, 2022^[31]). Further, the UK’s *White Paper on International Development* committed to champion global efforts to agree definitions, principles and reporting of nature-positive ODA with the OECD, MDBs and partner countries, and to deliver on its commitment to ensure UK ODA is nature-positive in line with these (Government of the UK, 2023^[49]). Finally, the UK supports governments, central banks, businesses, and financial institutions to integrate nature-related risks and opportunities into decision-making and build nature-positive economies, in partnership with UNDP’s BIOFIN and Financial Sector Deepening Africa (Government of the UK, 2022^[50]).

- Multilateral development banks put forward a *Joint MDB Statement on Nature, People and Planet* at UNFCCC COP26 in 2021 (MDBs, 2021^[51]), which commits MDBs to develop tools and methodologies to track and strengthen reporting on 'nature-positive' investments. Tracking principles have been developed (MDBs, 2023^[17]) where 'nature-positive finance' is defined as finance that supports actions that protect, restore or enhance sustainable use and management of nature, or enables these actions, contributing to the implementation of the KMGBF and its broad ambition to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, with a view to full recovery by 2050. Since then, MDBs have significantly advanced their work on conceptualising both nature and nature-positive finance. This work includes, most importantly, the *MDB Common Nature Finance Taxonomy* (World Bank, 2025^[18]) that defines a reference list of activities that qualify as nature / nature-positive finance; a new set of *MDB Common Principles for Tracking Nature Finance* launched at UNFCCC COP30 (MDBs, 2025^[19]) and a Practitioner's Guide on nature(-positive) finance (IADB, 2025^[20]).
- Among MDBs, there are several examples of the use of the nature-positive concept. The IADB is committed to increasing nature-positive finance and understands that supporting nature-positive investments is critical for economies and peoples, and to tackle climate change (IADB, 2022^[33]). The IADB considers mainstreaming nature and biodiversity considerations central to scale up nature-positive investments (IADB, 2022^[52]). In turn, the Asian Development Bank aims to become a regional model in nature-positive investment, inter alia, by developing appropriate financial instruments (e.g. BlueIMPACT Asia Platform) (ADB, 2022^[53]) and by providing regional knowledge and technical assistance to increase and accelerate nature-positive investments (ADB, 2022^[54]). The World Bank Group refers to mobilising nature-positive private finance (World Bank, 2022^[55]) and with the 20th replenishment of the International Development Association, it will step up its support to nature smart-policies and NbS, and develop a methodology to identify, monitor, and track nature-positive investments (IDA, 2022^[56]) – work that was updated with (IDA, 2024^[57]). The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development developed its approach to nature, with the aim to transitioning to a nature-positive economy (EBRD, 2023^[58]). The African Development Bank has set a nature-positive development agenda for Africa and is looking into debt-for-nature-climate swaps to mobilise biodiversity finance for nature-positive projects (AfDB, 2022^[59]).
- Other multilateral institutions also mention nature-positive, e.g. the Global Environment Facility (GEF, 2022^[60]), Food and Agriculture Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development (FAO, 2023^[61]; IFAD, 2022^[62]), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, SCBD & UNEP-WCMC, 2021^[63]), or the World Tourism Organization (World Travel and Tourism Council, UN Tourism, Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, and Nature Positive Travel and Tourism, 2024^[64]). For example, the GEF actively funds nature-positive initiatives to reverse biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems, and align climate action with sustainable development in developing countries.

To conclude, despite the growing use of the term, DAC members do so primarily to frame or communicate about the alignment process with the KMGBF or as an 'umbrella' term to refer to the objective of promoting synergies and identifying trade-offs across climate, environment and biodiversity action. For some DAC members, the concept is not integrated into their narratives, visions or strategies – referring instead to the process of aligning with the KMGBF – as nature-positive is perceived as too ambitious for the time being.

Assessing development co-operation activities through a “nature-positive” lens

To gauge the current contribution to nature-related objectives, an exploratory analysis was conducted on DAC members’ development finance activities. The analysis involved reviewing 2021–2022 data on official development finance and categorising activities according to their potential to contribute to or detract to nature-related objectives. This approach builds on a review of existing tools and methodologies that various countries and institutions use to track biodiversity-related finance (see Annex A). Thus far, only two approaches have been identified aiming at quantifying how development finance contributes to nature-positive (Nature Finance, 2022^[65]). The first tracks alignment by defining negative and positive contributions to nature and comes up with an overall nature-positive score by provider. It finds that 6% of development finance was strongly aligned with nature in 2022 (Nature Finance, 2022^[65]). The second approach classifies official development assistance (ODA) flows into nature-positive and nature-negative activities- and finding the overall ODA shares to be 1.99% and 9.18%, respectively over 2010-19 (Selomane et al., 2025^[66]). In addition, IUCN is developing a quantitative methodology to measure and track contributions towards protecting and restoring nature. The methodology helps assess opportunities and risks, set targets, measure progress, deliver nature-positive impacts, as well as assess investment portfolios and value-chain impacts (IUCN, 2023^[67]). Governments will be able to monitor the impact of their own investments, set national and sub-national biodiversity targets, and determine how different activities contribute to the targets they set. There are no other (publicly available) empirical analyses on how providers impact nature through their investments, although MDBs are also working to track such investments (MDBs, 2023^[17]). Indeed, MDBs have significantly advanced their work on conceptualising both nature and nature-positive finance. This work includes, most importantly, the *MDB Common Nature Finance Taxonomy* (World Bank, 2025^[18]) that defines a reference list of activities that qualify as nature / nature-positive finance; a new set of *MDB Common Principles for Tracking Nature Finance* launched at UNFCCC COP30 (MDBs, 2025^[19]) and a *Practitioner’s Guide on nature(-positive) finance* (IADB, 2025^[20]).

Drawing from these practices, five categories of development activities were defined:

- Nature-focused activities explicitly target biodiversity and nature conservation, as well as the sustainable management of natural resources as a primary objective. These are analogous to projects marked as principal for biodiversity using the OECD DAC Rio marker on biodiversity (e.g. protected area management, ecosystem restoration). Such activities could be expected to contribute directly to net gains for nature.
- Nature-mainstreaming activities deliberately integrate nature or biodiversity goals into their design (analogous to significant biodiversity-related projects using the Rio marker on biodiversity). These might include, for example, an agriculture project with components for sustainable land use or an infrastructure project with nature-based solutions for resilience. The aim is to deliver co-benefits for nature alongside other development outcomes.
- Nature-additional activities meet basic environmental safeguards and include some positive measures for nature, even if those are not the main project focus. This category captures projects that, in the reporting to the OECD, explicitly note that they go a step beyond “doing no harm” by incorporating additional nature-friendly practices or components (for instance, a road project that includes wildlife crossings or habitat restoration as part of its design).
- Nature-residual activities are not focused on nature and have no explicit nature-related goals, but their implementation may have minor residual impacts (positive or negative) on nature. Many social sector projects (education, health) or governance reforms fall into this category: they are generally having an intangible connection with or may be neutral to nature, aside from indirect effects.
- Nature-at-risk activities may pose significant potential risks to nature because of their sector or design, *if* proper safeguards are not in place. This includes projects in sectors like mining, large-scale transport infrastructure or energy developments that could lead to habitat destruction,

pollution, or other harm to biodiversity unless carefully managed. Examples of such activities are in (European Commission, 2022^[68]), (WWF, 2022^[69]) or (IPBES, 2019^[70]). While DAC members typically have safeguard policies, screen for environment-related risks and apply exclusion lists to ensure their activities in these sectors do no harm to nature, these are not always enforced systematically [as seen in (OECD, 2026^[28])].

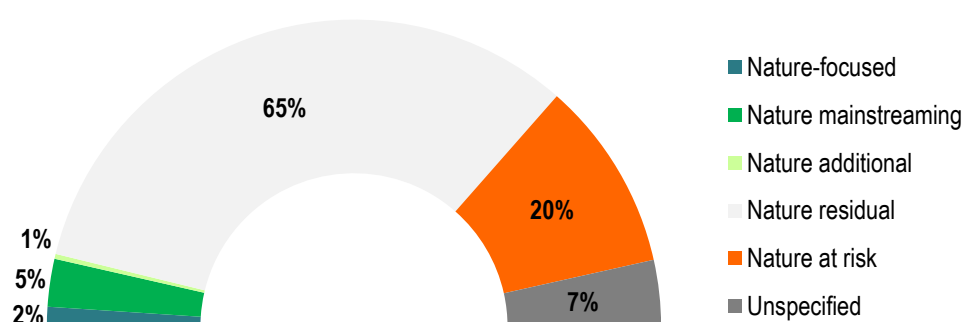
Using these categories, the analysis classified thousands of development finance commitments to estimate the share of funding in each category. It should be noted that this methodology is experimental and relies on available project data and expert judgment (Annex B provides further details on the classification approach). The results offer a snapshot of how current activities contribute to nature, recognising that the classification simplifies a spectrum of impacts and that data limitations persist. For example, these results are based on input-based accounting (the DAC CRS) and cannot say much beyond intent. Nature impacts or whether these reflect policy commitments is complex to measure, track and appraise, for a variety of reasons, and this analysis can only provide an estimate of those intentions but not on actual impacts.

Development finance for nature is more focused on ‘nature at risk’ than ‘nature conscious’ activities

The analysis found that in 2022 8% of total official development finance from DAC members could be considered “nature-related” and potentially contributing to nature-positive outcomes (Figure 2.1). Unpacking this category, 2% of total funding consisted of nature-focused projects likely to yield clear net gains for biodiversity. The remaining 6% were projects in the mainstreaming or additional categories, i.e. they included nature components or co-benefits but were not primarily conservation projects. By contrast, about 65% of finance was classified as nature-residual, having no direct effect (positive or negative) on nature, and around 20% was in nature-at-risk areas that could harm nature if not properly managed. In other words, only a small portion of development finance is currently targeting positive outcomes for nature, while a significant share could potentially be harming nature and the majority is essentially neutral. This reflects the fact that many of the sectors that can place nature at risk are usually important sectors driving economic development in developing countries. As such, from a development co-operation point of view, it is no surprise that investments in these sectors exceed nature-related investments – as the ‘clients’ of development co-operation providers are partner countries, which require important infrastructure investments to develop and that can place nature at risk (Selomane et al., 2025^[66]).

Figure 2.1. Distribution of DAC member official development finance to nature

2022, bilateral commitments

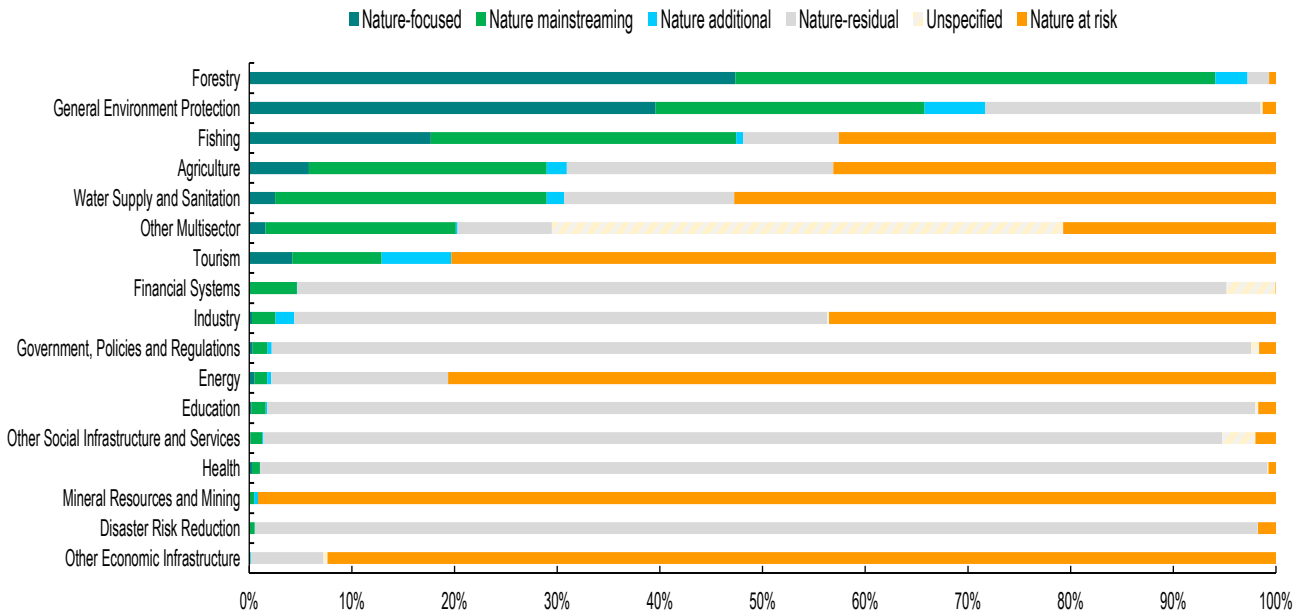


Note: About 7% of the ODF portfolio was considered as unspecified and/or unallocated by sector and could not be classified. Unspecified commitments are those for which there are insufficient details regarding their allocation by income, sector, or project. Consequently, such commitments cannot be evaluated for meaningful interpretations within the scope of this analysis. As such, unspecified shares could be considered as ‘unknown unknowns’ and DAC members could prioritise actions to enhance the transparency of these commitments in the future. These unspecified activities are excluded from the analysis. Further, 38% of ODF is considered as non-allocable aid (e.g. in-donor refugee/asylum costs, in-donor scholarships/training, administrative costs, general budget support, debt relief) and was not included within this analysis.
Source: (OECD, 2024^[71]).

The contribution of provider activities to nature varies widely by sector (Figure 2.2). In relative terms, the sectors that could be contributing the most to nature-positive outcomes in 2021–22 were forestry, general environmental protection, fisheries, agriculture, and water supply and sanitation. For example, an estimated 97% of forestry-related ODA and 72% of general environmental protection official development finance was nature-related (either focused on or significantly beneficial to nature). On the other hand, sectors such as mining, other economic infrastructure, energy and tourism had the highest shares of activities classified as nature-at-risk (with well over 80% of activities in those sectors potentially threatening nature if unmanaged). Sectors like health, education, disaster risk reduction, and government and administration were dominated by nature-residual activities (over 95% of those sectoral funds had no explicit link to nature). These findings help pinpoint areas where nature-related objectives are already being integrated (e.g. forestry, environment); and where there is substantial room to ramp up integration or apply safeguards (e.g. mining, infrastructure, energy, as well as “neutral” sectors like health and education that could integrate nature-based approaches).

Figure 2.2. Distribution of nature-related development finance by sector and policy domain

2022, bilateral commitments



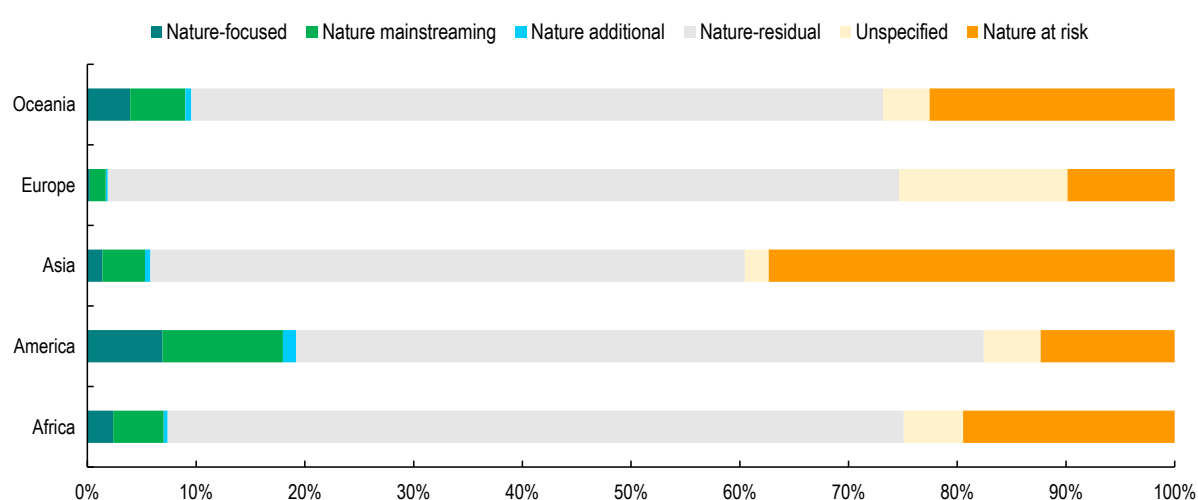
Source: (OECD, 2024^[71]).

The regional distribution of nature-related development finance also showed disparities (Figure 2.3). In absolute terms, the regions receiving the most biodiversity-related development finance in 2022 were

Africa (USD 3.6 billion, about 40% of all nature-related finance) and Asia (USD 2.5 billion, 28%). However, when looking at nature-related aid as a proportion of each region's total aid, Americas had the highest relative focus (approximately 19% of ODA to the Americas was nature-related), followed by Oceania (10%) and Africa (7%). Meanwhile, most of the funding classified as potentially nature-at-risk was concentrated in Asia (around USD 16 billion, 53% of all at-risk funding) and Africa (USD 9.6 billion, 32%). In proportional terms, Asia had the highest share of its aid potentially harming nature (37% of development finance to Asia), followed by Oceania (23%). These patterns indicate that providers have tended to finance nature-related projects more in more developed regions, like Latin America, whereas regions with poorer countries see more nature-at-risk type of activities. The concentration of nature-at-risk activities in Asia and Africa suggests that particular attention is needed there to manage environmental risks in development projects.

Figure 2.3. Regional distribution of nature-related development finance

2022, bilateral commitments



Source: (OECD, 2024^[71]).

Current nature-related trends have several preliminary implications for development co-operation

The above results shed light on where and how development co-operation providers could take action to align their portfolios with nature-positive goals and the KMGBF. In particular, the analysis points to several preliminary implications for providers:

- **Scale up nature-focused activities:** Explicit biodiversity projects made up only 2% of total flows over 2021-22 (Figure 2.1). There is ample room – and need – to increase the number and scale of projects that directly invest in nature (e.g. conservation areas, ecological restoration, sustainable resource management). These activities are not only central to biodiversity goals but are also crucial to delivering the net gains for nature that define a nature-positive approach. This finding echoes calls in (OECD, 2026^[28]) to increase the share of development finance targeting biodiversity as a principal objective. Providers could look to expand funding in areas that have proven positive impacts on nature, such as agroforestry, sustainable fisheries, habitat restoration, pollution control and urban green infrastructure, while ensuring these efforts are embedded in a broader strategy to reverse nature loss and regenerate ecosystems.

- Analyse and expand “mainstreamed” nature projects: A modest share of activities currently fall under the nature-mainstreaming or nature-additional categories. Providers could examine these projects to learn what has worked and to replicate success. Critically, they could ensure that such projects at least achieve *no net loss* for nature – and ideally net gains – even if nature is a secondary goal. Mainstreaming biodiversity effectively in, for instance, agriculture or infrastructure projects can create models for broader application. Linking these efforts more explicitly to a nature-positive vision could help ensure that mainstreamed projects are not only biodiversity-aware, but actively contribute to reversing nature loss, supporting systemic change across sectors.
- Target low nature-engagement sectors: Providers could identify sectors in their portfolios that currently have a very low proportion of nature-related finance (for example, health or education) and explore opportunities to integrate nature-positive components into them. This might involve innovative approaches like incorporating green infrastructure in educational facilities or linking public health initiatives with ecosystem health (such as addressing zoonotic disease risks through conservation efforts). Pursuing these opportunities will likely require dialogue with partner countries and creative project design to connect biodiversity objectives with other development priorities. Framing such efforts within a nature-positive approach can help highlight their contribution to broader ecological regeneration goals, making the case for cross-sector investment in nature even where biodiversity is not the primary focus.
- Revisit residual-impact interventions: Many interventions (capacity development, governance reforms, general budget support, etc.) are categorised as nature-residual and make up a large share of portfolios. Providers assess these for any indirect links to nature (for instance, investigating if a governance programme could include natural resource management training or if an education programme could incorporate environmental awareness). While these activities are not directly aimed at biodiversity, adjusting them could cumulatively contribute to a nature-positive approach. However, translating such indirect impacts into a rigorous nature-positive framework is challenging and may require new methodologies to determine when an ostensibly “neutral” project can be counted as contributing to nature-positive outcomes (zu Ermgassen et al., 2023^[24]). Still, by identifying clear pathways through which residual-impact projects can generate measurable ecological benefits, providers can begin to align a greater share of their portfolios with nature-positive objectives, even in sectors not traditionally associated with conservation.
- Scrutinise nature-at-risk activities: Providers need to give special attention to activities that could harm nature. Projects in high-risk sectors could have strong safeguards and undergo enhanced scrutiny during appraisal. In some cases, providers may need to redirect funding away from particularly harmful activities unless they can be redesigned to minimise damage and provide compensatory benefits. Strengthening environmental safeguard policies, due diligence processes, and screening tools could be a way forward (OECD, 2026^[28]). Providers could ensure that high-risk projects incorporate mitigation measures and, where possible, offsets or restoration efforts to achieve no net loss (and preferably net gain) for any biodiversity affected. Embedding these safeguards within a broader nature-positive strategy could also help shift the role of high-risk sectors, from merely managing harm to actively contributing to ecosystem recovery, thereby aligning even challenging interventions with long-term regenerative goals.
- Find the basis to develop a nature-positive vision and strategy: The analysis shows that, together, the nature-focused, mainstreaming, and additional activities (the “nature-related” segment) plus the residual activities represent the portion of provider activities that could form the basis of a future nature-positive strategy for each provider, whereas the at-risk segment highlights where stronger safeguards or alternative approaches are needed. Providers can therefore define tailored, portfolio-wide nature-positive pathways that reflect their comparative advantages, sectoral focus and partnership priorities, moving beyond isolated biodiversity projects toward a systemic approach that places nature recovery at the core of development planning.

To conclude, the findings outlined above demonstrate that development co-operation providers have a clear opportunity to more systematically align their portfolios with nature-positive objectives. While only a small share of finance currently targets biodiversity as a principal objective, the building blocks for a nature-positive transition already exist across a wide range of activities, including mainstreamed, residual and even at-risk interventions. By identifying and scaling up those efforts that deliver measurable ecological benefits, and by embedding safeguards and innovation in risk-prone sectors, providers can help reverse nature loss while advancing broader development outcomes.

The nature-positive framing offers added value by encouraging a whole-of-portfolio perspective: one that moves beyond project-level conservation efforts toward integrated, cross-sectoral strategies that restore and regenerate nature. Much like “net zero” has galvanised action on climate, a clear, actionable commitment to nature-positive development could unify and elevate efforts across policy areas.

Going forward, providers could build on this analysis and preliminary conclusions to define their own nature-positive pathways, grounded in robust evidence, transparency and context-specific priorities. This includes improving tracking systems, investing in capacity and co-creation with partner countries and testing new methodologies to assess indirect and systemic contributions to nature recovery. With decisive action and strategic alignment, development co-operation can play a transformative role in achieving the KMGBF and in securing a nature-positive future for all. The following chapter delves into some of these elements.

3 Rethinking development co-operation to achieve net gains for nature

The concept of nature-positive can carry significant implications for how development co-operation is planned and implemented. There are two main preliminary policy implications that emerge for development co-operation providers from the current work for this paper. First, adopting a nature-positive approach requires aligning with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). Providers integrating the vision and targets of the KMGBF into their own strategies, in much the same way as the Paris Agreement is integrated, can ensure that development efforts contribute to halting and reversing nature loss – and thus are on a trajectory towards contributing to nature-positive. The added value of the nature-positive framing lies in its unifying, outcome-oriented language that can help rally political attention, mobilise finance and guide action across sectors, much like “net zero” has done for climate. Second, to be nature-positive, providers could go beyond the traditional *do no harm* ethos and actively pursue net gains for nature across their project activities. This means strengthening and building upon safeguard policies to ensure that every project not only mitigates its environmental impacts but wherever possible leaves biodiversity better off. In practice, this requires rethinking project planning and evaluation to incorporate net biodiversity gain as a core objective, rather than an afterthought. This shift encourages a more proactive, regenerative approach that positions nature as a foundational asset in development, rather than a constraint.

Implementing these insights in practice is complex. Providers face institutional, financial and operational hurdles, and would need to be realistic about the pace of change. This chapter first elaborates on these preliminary policy implications and what they entail for providers of development co-operation and then provides an overview of the main challenges that may hamper progress in the short-term on nature-positive.

Development co-operation policy needs to reflect the ambition to achieve net biodiversity gain

Aligning development co-operation with nature-positive requires ambition

Framing development co-operation around nature-positive objectives implies aligning with the global goals for nature, notably the KMGBF (WWF, 2022^[72]). Providers could treat the international biodiversity targets (e.g. halting biodiversity loss by 2030, achieving recovery by 2050) as guiding benchmarks for their own development strategies. In many ways, *nature-positive* serves as a framework to channel development efforts toward the same end-goals that the global community has agreed upon for biodiversity. However, its added value lies in offering a compelling, outcome-driven narrative that resonates beyond the biodiversity community, helping to engage finance, planning and development actors around a shared

regenerative vision. Concretely, aligning with nature-positive means that providers embed biodiversity considerations into all aspects of their policies and programmes – rather than treating nature as a separate or niche issue (WWF, 2022^[73]; Finance for Biodiversity Foundation and UNEP, 2024^[74]). It calls for a shift in mindset: from viewing development and environment as potentially competing objectives, to recognising that long-term development outcomes depend on safeguarding and restoring nature (Milner-Gulland, 2022^[27]). Nature-positive provides the strategic language and framing to support this shift, encouraging integrated approaches that drive both ecological recovery and sustainable development.

Achieving this alignment requires action on several fronts (Milner-Gulland et al., 2021^[75]), including:

- **Embed nature in strategies and policies:** Integrate nature-positive principles into development co-operation strategies, policies, and action plans. Biodiversity and ecosystem health would need to be incorporated as foundational considerations in all sectors (not just environment or nature-related projects). Providers may need to update their strategy documents to explicitly include nature-positive goals and ensure high-level buy-in so that senior management and all departments treat nature impacts as part of their decision-making. This also involves engaging partner countries and implementing agencies so that nature-positive objectives are shared and understood across the board. Importantly, providers would need to outline clear, time-bound action plans that detail how they will reduce negative impacts on nature and achieve net gains, while still meeting socioeconomic development goals (e.g. poverty reduction). Nature-positive then provides a coherent, outcomes-oriented framework to embed nature across all levels of planning, helping to unify institutional action and communicate ambition clearly.
- **Set SMART targets for nature-positive outcomes:** Development co-operation providers could establish specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) targets related to nature-positive outcomes (Maron et al., 2021^[76]). These targets need to be clearly defined and aligned with global biodiversity commitments. For example, a provider might set a target to increase the share of its portfolio that delivers measurable biodiversity benefits by a certain percentage by 2025, or to ensure that a certain number of hectares of ecosystems are restored through its interventions by 2030. Such targets would need to be linked to a baseline and include a timeline (see next points) to allow effective tracking. In some cases, providers might integrate biodiversity targets with their climate targets to create synergies (since many nature-based solutions yield both climate and biodiversity benefits) (Bull et al., 2020^[77]). A phased approach can be useful – starting with modest targets informed by a baseline portfolio analysis (as discussed in the chapter 2) and then ratcheting up ambition as experience grows. For instance, the GEF has supported conservation efforts to protect the snow leopard population in Central Asia by promoting alternative livelihoods, improving inspection and monitoring capacity, including SMART-based tools (Novikov and Kato, 2024^[78]). Nature-positive, therefore, helps set not only protective but also regenerative targets, aiming for net ecological gains that reflect ambition beyond conventional compliance.
- **Define clear timeframes and use a baseline year:** Providers need to establish a clear timeframe for achieving their nature-positive goals, including interim milestones. In line with the global agenda, the 2020 baseline recommended by the Nature Positive Initiative (and implicit in the KMGBF) can be used as the reference point for measuring gains (Dijkstra-Silva, Schaltegger and Beske-Janssen, 2022^[79]). Aligning with this timeline means that providers would aim to show no net loss of nature from 2020 forward, net positive impacts by 2030, and contributions to full recovery by 2050. Setting such timeframes helps co-ordinate efforts with international milestones and ensures that all stakeholders are working toward the same deadlines. Internally, providers could sync these environmental targets with their programme cycles and funding timelines. For instance, if 2030 is a key target year, they might set interim goals for 2025 or 2027 to allocate funding and assess progress, ensuring they are on track for the 2030 outcome. Using the nature-positive framing helps connect short- and long-term planning around a shared, globally recognised goal, creating alignment across sectors and time horizons.

- **Establish a robust baseline:** A well-defined baseline is critical for tracking progress. Providers could determine the starting point against which improvements (or setbacks) in nature will be measured. As noted in chapter 2, defining this baseline is complex – it could include metrics like species abundance, habitat quality, or other indices of ecosystem health, and data for these metrics may be limited. Nonetheless, it is important to gather the best available baseline data (potentially using 2020 as a baseline year) and document initial conditions. This may involve combining multiple data sources: scientific surveys, satellite observations, environmental indices, as well as socio-economic data on pressures driving biodiversity loss. Some providers might incorporate innovative data sources such as Indigenous and local knowledge or new global datasets (e.g. the UN's ecosystem accounts) to enrich their baseline (King's College London, n.d.^[80]; Society for Ecological Restoration, n.d.^[81]; FAO and WRI, n.d.^[82]; United Nations, n.d.^[83]). The baseline will serve as the reference to evaluate net gains or losses in the coming years. Nature-positive initiatives benefit from baselines that capture both the current state of ecosystems and their potential for recovery, enabling progress tracking that is more dynamic and regenerative in intent.
- **Monitor, measure and report outcomes:** Continuous monitoring and reporting on nature-positive outcomes could become a core part of development co-operation practice. Providers could adopt indicators that directly measure biodiversity outcomes (not just inputs or outputs). For example, rather than only reporting the number of environmental projects funded or the number of hectares of forest protected, agencies could track indicators like changes in forest cover, water quality, species populations or other outcomes attributable to their interventions. One challenge is the mismatch between short project cycles (often 3-5 years) and the long timeframes needed for ecological recovery. To address this, providers might need to invest in long-term monitoring partnerships or use proxy indicators that can signal progress in the interim. It is also important to avoid over-claiming results; methodologies to realistically attribute outcomes to interventions and to avoid double counting benefits across projects would need to be devised. Existing methodologies for assessing the biodiversity impact of infrastructure and land-use changes provide valuable insights (Bull et al., 2014^[84]). Further, international efforts are underway (through the Nature Positive Initiative and others) to identify a core set of biodiversity metrics for consistent use. Providers could contribute to and draw from these efforts so that their reporting is scientifically robust and comparable. Transparent reporting on progress (and shortfalls) will build credibility and allow for adaptive management. Framing this reporting within a nature-positive context allows providers to demonstrate not just activity, but ecological improvement, thus supporting credibility, accountability and long-term impact.
- **Leverage technology and partnerships for accountability:** Ensuring accountability for nature-positive outcomes may require new technologies and partnerships. Advances in remote sensing, bioacoustics, Artificial Intelligence and environmental DNA monitoring can greatly enhance the ability to track changes in ecosystems cost-effectively across large areas. Providers could invest in or collaborate on these technological monitoring tools to get better data on what their projects are achieving in terms of biodiversity. Partnerships with research institutions, NGOs, Indigenous peoples and local communities can also help in independently monitoring outcomes and validating results (Bladon, Yassin Mohammed and Milner-Gulland, 2014^[85]; Bonham et al., 2014^[86]). For instance, providers could partner with universities or conservation organisations to conduct independent impact evaluations of a sample of projects, or use citizen science networks for on-the-ground biodiversity observations. By using third-party monitoring and engaging external experts, providers improve transparency and can be more confident in the integrity of their nature-positive claims. Spatially explicit monitoring (tracking where exactly changes are happening) is especially important for understanding context and cumulative impacts. Such accountability mechanisms are central to the nature-positive vision, ensuring that claims of nature recovery are grounded, verifiable, and inclusive.

Going beyond “Do No Harm” approaches to achieving net biodiversity gain

For development co-operation to be *nature-positive* requires more than avoiding negative impacts on nature – it requires actively creating positive outcomes, striving for net gains in biodiversity across its activities. In practice, this means strengthening the implementation of safeguard policies and then moving beyond safeguards to ensure projects leave nature better off. Traditional environmental safeguards in development (often based on the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, minimise, restore, offset harm) focus on preventing or compensating for damage. A nature-positive approach embraces those safeguards but pushes further to make sure development activities enhance ecosystems and biodiversity. Several key actions (Milner-Gulland et al., 2021^[75]) could be adopted to pursue net biodiversity gain:

- **Strengthen and exceed mitigation requirements:** The mitigation hierarchy remains a fundamental tool – projects first avoid harm where possible, then minimise and restore, and only use offsets as a last resort for any residual damage. However, in a nature-positive approach, simply achieving *no net loss* via offsets is not sufficient. Providers would therefore need to prioritise, for example, project designs that proactively improve habitat connectivity or ecological functionality, going beyond an approach of offsetting destroyed habitat elsewhere. Each step of mitigation would need to be rigorously evaluated for effectiveness. Providers would distinguish clearly between actions that directly conserve or restore biodiversity and those that are merely offsets compensating for damage. Offsets, if used, need to be limited to cases where damage is unavoidable and meet strict criteria (e.g. like-for-like habitat replacement, additionality, long-term management). Ultimately, nature-positive projects ideally avoid the need for offsets by building in net positive impacts from the start.
- **Set net gain targets for projects or portfolios:** Providers could aim to set measurable net gain targets – either at the project level or across their activities. For instance, a target might be that each infrastructure project will result in a 10% net gain in local biodiversity value within five years of completion, or that all activities as a whole (taking a portfolio approach) achieve a certain aggregate increase in specific biodiversity metrics by 2030 (Addison et al., 2020^[87]). To do this credibly, robust measurement systems are needed to quantify biodiversity gains (such as indices that combine multiple indicators of ecosystem health). Establishing these targets forces clarity on what constitutes a gain and how it will be measured, driving better design and follow-up.
- **Assess and monitor mitigation outcomes as appropriate:** For projects where potentially significant biodiversity-related impacts have been identified, providers may consider appropriate assessment and monitoring of mitigation and, where relevant, enhancement measures, in accordance with their applicable safeguard frameworks and the level of risk involved. Such assessment and monitoring can help ensure that measures set out in relevant environmental management plans translate into effective outcomes for nature.
- **Recognise limits in high-biodiversity areas:** In some cases, the best way to achieve a nature-positive outcome is not to proceed with a harmful project at all. When development is proposed in areas of critical biodiversity value (e.g. irreplaceable habitats for endangered species), even the best mitigation may not prevent irreversible loss. In areas of particularly high biodiversity value, providers could apply their applicable environmental and social safeguard frameworks rigorously, including consideration of alternatives and avoidance of significant adverse impacts, taking into account partner-country circumstances and relevant international standards. In high-risk contexts, the precautionary approach would need to prevail: it may be better to redirect investment to a less sensitive location or alternative solution than to bank on offsets that may fail. A clear understanding of the initial site conditions (i.e. greenfield vs. brownfield sites) is crucial to determine the

appropriate approach for biodiversity enhancement (AIIB, 2023^[88]).² By setting these red lines, providers signal that nature-positive development sometimes means choosing not to pursue certain interventions.

- **Enhance safeguards with nature-positive actions:** Providers may consider, as appropriate, incorporating nature-positive concepts into existing safeguard policies. For example, when conducting Environmental Impact Assessments, providers can include an evaluation of how a project might achieve net gain, not just how to minimise damage. Safeguard frameworks could require that projects where material biodiversity-related risks have been identified identify potential enhancement measures (like habitat creation, species reintroductions, etc.), in addition to mitigation. Providers could also ensure that conservation actions benefit local communities and respect the rights and knowledge of Indigenous peoples, and local communities, thus marrying social safeguards with biodiversity safeguards. Over time, the goal is to evolve from seeing safeguards as a compliance exercise to leveraging them as an opportunity for positive impact.

Notwithstanding implementation of nature-positive actions may face important limitations in developing countries, where development co-operation must carefully navigate trade-offs between conservation goals and urgent development needs. In contexts where poverty reduction, job creation, infrastructure development and food security are pressing priorities, efforts to protect or restore ecosystems may be perceived as competing with immediate socio-economic objectives. Land-use decisions, for example, often involve difficult choices between conserving natural habitats and expanding agricultural production or energy access. Without strong incentives, adequate compensation mechanisms or integrated planning, nature-positive strategies risk being deprioritised or perceived as externally driven. Development co-operation would therefore need to be particularly sensitive to these realities, supporting policies and investments that align ecological goals with local development aspirations and ensuring that nature-positive outcomes go hand-in-hand with tangible social and economic benefits for communities. Currently, only a few development co-operation providers have started moving in this direction. For example, the French Development Agency (AFD) is one of the leaders in attempting to systematically integrate net biodiversity gain into its operations (Box 3.1). Such pioneers demonstrate that it is possible to develop methodologies for net gain within broader development co-operation strategies. Overall, however, most DAC members do not yet have institutionalised policies to require net biodiversity gain in their projects.

Box 3.1. AFD principles for tracking biodiversity and nature-positive development finance

AFD's analytical framework assesses the financial value of biodiversity co-benefits. As such, a project or investment must fulfil two conditions to be considered nature-positive:

- Compliance with the highest standards on environmental due diligence in strict conformity with the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy to guarantee no net loss for nature; and

² Achieving net gain can be much easier in some scenarios than others. For example, brownfield sites (previously degraded lands) offer clear opportunities – development projects on such sites can incorporate habitat restoration that leads to immediate gains in biodiversity without needing offsets. On the other hand, projects in pristine or high-value ecosystems (greenfield sites) are much more problematic – by definition, any impact on a pristine area is hard to fully offset. In those cases, nature-positive planning may dictate that the project either be redesigned to drastically reduce its footprint or be avoided entirely. For instance, a project that would fragment a critical wildlife corridor might be rerouted, or a proposed development in a primary forest might be cancelled in favour of an alternate location, because no amount of tree planting elsewhere could truly compensate for that loss.

- Design the activity to produce a net gain for biodiversity with reference to a scientific baseline comparing scenarios with and without the project.

Furthermore, AFD's nature-positive qualification criteria also takes into careful consideration: (i) the European Commission's technical expert group on sustainable finance; (ii) the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures; (iii) and tracking biodiversity finance within the Making Finance Work for Nature working group of the International Development Finance Club; and the (iv) Common Principles for Climate Mitigation Finance Tracking.

For AFD, "a project generates a net gain, a nature-positive impact or biodiversity co-benefits if nature itself or the governance of biodiversity are improved as a result of project implementation, in the project's physical area of influence". According to AFD, demonstrating net gain is ideally based on a comparison with a counterfactual scenario, which models a "no project" trajectory from the baseline situation (measuring and collecting data for this "no project" scenario usually entails identifying a control group or area, which is deemed not affected by the project).

Overall, AFD's guiding principles to align investments with the KMGBF include: building on best standards for biodiversity finance; systematically assessing the alignment of investments with the KMGBF; calculating nature-positive finance according to potential biodiversity net gains; making a deep commitment to protection of the planet; nature-positive impacts: a systematic criteria for investment decision-making; integrating nature-positive accountability into the Group's SDGs reporting.

Source: (AFD, 2022^[30]).

Implications for institutions, capacities, partner country engagement and trade-offs

While the concept of nature-positive provides an inspiring goal, there are significant challenges hindering its direct application in development co-operation (and beyond). Providers face a range of institutional, technical, and practical obstacles that would need to be overcome to turn the concept into reality. Given the current misalignment between the reality of development finance flows and high-level commitments, there is a risk that nature-positive could be embraced in rhetoric but not in substance – a form of *greenwashing* – if these challenges are not addressed. This section discusses these challenges and what they could entail for development co-operation providers.

Institutional and conceptual challenges

One key barrier is the task of defining and integrating nature-positive across the entire development co-operation landscape. Nature-positive represents a systemic change in how activities and partnerships are conceived and assessed, and building consensus around this new concept takes time. Many development institutions are still grappling with basic biodiversity mainstreaming; introducing a new cross-cutting concept can meet with internal resistance or confusion (Trinomics B.V & Climate Policy Initiative, 2022^[10]). In some cases, senior management and staff not specialised in environment may see biodiversity as a secondary or niche issue, largely the domain of environmental specialists (Casado-Asensio, Blaquier and Gualberti, 2024^[89]). Persuading all departments that nature-positive is relevant to their work – from health to finance to governance programmes – can be an uphill battle. There may also be institutional inertia, as procedures and funding allocations have long been set without considering a "net gain for nature" criterion. Moreover, although we now have a general definition of nature-positive, operationalising it in concrete terms for each provider is challenging. Each institution might interpret what counts as nature-positive differently in the absence of universally agreed metrics. Without clear guidance, there is a risk of

fragmented approaches that dilute the concept's impact. This lack of a unified, practical definition across the development community may slow down adoption.

Another challenge is ensuring that nature-positive does not become just a buzzword. Skeptics have pointed out that bold terms like this can enable superficial commitments, where organisations claim to be “nature-positive” without making fundamental changes to their operations. There is concern that if standards are not rigorous, almost any project could be labeled “nature-positive,” undermining credibility. The difficulty of measuring complex biodiversity outcomes feeds this concern; what cannot be measured well might not be managed well. Furthermore, some critics worry that an emphasis on shiny new concepts might distract from addressing root causes of biodiversity loss. For example, achieving a nature-positive world ultimately requires confronting issues such as overconsumption, unsustainable agricultural and energy practices, and economic incentives that currently drive nature loss. If nature-positive efforts focus only on project-level tweaks and not on these structural issues, they may fall short. On the positive side, the increased visibility of biodiversity – which nature-positive brings – could galvanise action. But there is a delicate balance: moving too quickly to pledge ambitious nature-positive goals without laying the groundwork (data, capacity, political will) can lead to failures or backlash. Thus, providers face the institutional challenge of pacing themselves – strengthening existing biodiversity efforts and internal capacity even as they adopt the new concept, to ensure nature-positive commitments are credible and achievable.

Capacity and data constraints

Implementing nature-positive approaches will demand significant capacity development and data improvements. Most providers currently have limited in-house expertise on nature, the environment and biodiversity (Casado-Asensio, Blaquier and Gualberti, 2024^[89]). Environmental teams within providers tend to be small, and staff in country offices may not have training on biodiversity issues. To engage meaningfully in nature-positive planning, providers would need to bolster expertise in ecology, conservation science, and environmental economics. This means hiring or training specialists who can design and evaluate projects for biodiversity impact, as well as equipping generalist staff with basic knowledge on how their projects relate to nature. In addition, the monitoring and analysis of biodiversity outcomes is far more complex than tracking financial inputs or typical development outputs. Providers would need new tools and skills to measure changes in ecosystem health, species populations, and other indicators over time.³ These capabilities are currently weak or absent in many agencies. Building them will likely require collaboration with scientific organisations or consultants, the creation of new guidelines, and perhaps establishing dedicated units or funds for biodiversity monitoring. Examples across DAC members to overcome this challenge are emerging (Box 3.2).

³ For example, one of the significant challenges in pursuing net gain is quantifying the benefits in a credible way to inform decision-making. Standard cost-benefit analysis is not well-suited to biodiversity, because it is difficult to monetise or even quantify ecological gains in commensurate units. Providers would need better tools for valuing ecosystem services and biodiversity outcomes.

Box 3.2. Overcoming capacity constraints on nature-positive – selected DAC member examples

Addressing capacity and data challenges will require a phased approach. Providers can start by investing in internal learning and tapping into existing knowledge networks. For example, the UK has established a Nature Facility (IIED, 2023^[90]), which functions as a helpdesk for biodiversity and climate knowledge. It provides training, tailored courses, expert consultations, and advisory services for government staff via a roster of technical experts available on a call-down basis. This approach ensures that foundational knowledge on biodiversity and nature-positive concepts is embedded within institutions, creating a more informed workforce capable of developing and implementing effective biodiversity strategies.

The UK also has an International Academy based in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office with an 'Energy, Climate and Environment Faculty'; and a network of Climate, Energy and Environment Attaches based at UK Posts overseas.

Another example is provided by Canada: to strengthen the capacities of Global Affairs Canada staff, as well as experts and partners on the ground, Canada regularly conducts training sessions on integrating environmental and climate concerns into development initiatives.

Data limitations pose a further challenge. Much of the biodiversity data that providers would rely on comes from partner countries and global datasets, which can be patchy. Many developing countries lack comprehensive biodiversity inventories or up-to-date environmental statistics. Even where data exist (e.g. forest cover change, species threat levels), they may not be in a form that links easily to specific projects or investments. The result is that providers often have to operate with considerable uncertainty about baseline conditions and trends, making it hard to quantify their contributions to nature-positive outcomes.

Finally, current monitoring systems in development co-operation are not geared to measure ecological change. Reporting is usually focused on financial disbursements and short-term project deliverables. To track nature-positive progress, providers would need to implement new monitoring frameworks possibly spanning decades (far beyond a project's lifetime). This long horizon and the diffuse outcomes of nature (which may be influenced by many factors beyond the project) complicate accountability.

Integration with partner country strategies and implementing partners

Development co-operation does not operate in a vacuum – it works through partnerships with recipient countries and various implementing organisations. A significant challenge, therefore, is achieving uptake of the nature-positive concept beyond the providers themselves, extending into partner governments and implementation channels. Yet, partner countries have not yet adopted the term nature-positive in their own planning. They may have commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (like their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, NBSAPs), but the phrasing and framing of nature-positive is new. The level of ambition in partner countries' biodiversity plans also varies widely, and many NBSAPs are still being updated to reflect the KMGBF. For nature-positive to be effective, it ideally would be embraced in partner countries' development strategies – otherwise, providers pushing the concept might find limited traction or even resistance. Further, there is also the reality that partner countries face a crowded landscape of environmental concepts and initiatives: from nature-based solutions (NbS) to net zero, climate resilience, green growth, etc. Introducing "nature-positive" as another concept could overwhelm or confuse planning processes if not carefully aligned with existing frameworks. Development co-operation providers would therefore need to work with partners to show how nature-positive aligns with or complements what countries are already trying to do (for instance, it could be presented to fulfill the goals of their NBSAPs in co-operation with providers).

Another aspect is implementing partners – such as multilateral development banks, UN agencies, international NGOs, and private contractors that often execute development projects. To date, nature-positive language has gained the most traction among international conservation NGOs, multilateral development banks and some private sector coalitions, but it is not yet a standard term for many implementing agencies on the ground. If those organisations do not adopt the concept, it will be hard for providers to translate into project design and implementation. Development co-operation providers might include nature-positive requirements in their funding agreements, but if implementers are not on board or lack capacity, those requirements may be ignored or superficially addressed.

Therefore, another challenge for providers will be to promote the nature-positive approach across their networks (on top of partner countries). This could involve advocacy and dialogue in international fora to get multilateral institutions to incorporate nature-positive goals. It might also entail providing guidance and incentives to contractors and grant recipients to design projects that contribute to nature-positive outcomes. Providers could, for example, adjust procurement criteria to favor proposals that demonstrate biodiversity benefits, or launch joint initiatives with partner governments dedicated to nature-positive development.

Trade-offs and accepting some nature harm

Even if the previous challenges are overcome, a nature-positive development portfolio approach may be difficult to achieve in the near term for many providers. As seen earlier, economic activities and associated development co-operation involves trade-offs: there will be cases where other urgent development goals necessitate actions that have some negative impact on nature. A pragmatic challenge, then, is deciding how to handle activities that are not nature-positive and place nature at risk. Providers would need to accept that some projects might cause biodiversity loss and determine under what conditions that is tolerable, all while still aiming to maximise net positive outcomes overall. To navigate these trade-offs, development co-operation providers may need to develop clear criteria and processes, such as:

- **Defining acceptable trade-offs:** Providers could establish guidelines for which development projects provide enough critical social or economic benefits to justify some biodiversity loss (Griffiths et al., 2018^[91]). For instance, a rural roads project might damage some habitat but drastically improve market access for isolated communities. Providers would need to articulate the rationale when a project that is not nature-positive is funded and ensure that such cases are exceptions under defined circumstances (e.g. national security, humanitarian crises, etc.).
- **Identifying exclusions or exemptions:** Determining whether certain sectors, instruments, or partners could be exempt from strict nature-positive requirements due to the nature of their work could be useful. Examples might include humanitarian assistance (where speed is essential), in-country refugee support, or perhaps small-scale social programmes where impacts on nature are negligible. Having explicit (but limited) exemptions can help manage expectations and focus nature-positive efforts where they are most relevant.
- **Whole-of-activity-level impact balancing:** If some projects have negative impacts, providers would need to look at their portfolio as a whole, understood as the totality of their activities, and aim to offset those negatives with positives elsewhere. This could involve developing a *scoring or accounting system* to aggregate biodiversity impacts across all projects – essentially a balance sheet for nature. By quantifying positive and negative impacts in commensurate units, a provider could ensure that positives outweigh negatives portfolio-wide. This is a complex exercise (given the difficulty of comparing different impacts), but it could push the institution to internalise trade-offs and seek an overall net positive balance.
- **Maintaining credibility with safeguards:** It is important for providers that embracing nature-positive does not lead to abandoning or weakening existing rigorous safeguards under the illusion that “net gain” elsewhere cancels out harm where a given activity takes place. Some observers

fear that if nature-positive is poorly implemented, it might replace proven safeguard processes with something more vague or lenient. Providers would need to guard against this by embedding nature-positive thinking into the mitigation hierarchy rather than substituting one for the other, as noted earlier. In practice, this means continuing to require that each project go through thorough environmental assessment and harm mitigation. Nature-positive would augment this process by adding the expectation of enhancement, not by giving projects a pass because they claim some net gain.

Conclusion: Towards a practical and pragmatic nature-positive approach for providers

Contributing to a nature-positive future is a long-term endeavor that will require iterative learning and scaling up of efforts. Given the challenges discussed, development co-operation providers would likely need to adopt a phased and pragmatic approach (PBL, 2022^[14]). Rather than achieving everything at once, they can start with foundational steps and progressively build the necessary frameworks, capacity, and partnerships to fully implement nature-positive strategies. Nature-positive offers a unifying vision to reverse nature loss, much like “net zero” has done for climate and can help elevate biodiversity from a niche concern to a central pillar of sustainable development policy. In practical terms, providers could consider the following entry points to get started:

- **Improving biodiversity screening processes:** Enhancing existing project screening and appraisal tools to better capture potential impacts on nature could be a low-hanging fruit for providers. This might involve integrating new checklists or criteria into project design phases to identify opportunities for positive nature outcomes and flag risks early. By refining these processes, providers could ensure that considerations of ecosystems and species are systematically included in project planning from the outset, rather than retrofitted later.
- **Setting incremental targets for portfolio shifts:** Providers could set targeted objectives that gradually move their portfolios toward nature-positive outcomes. For example, a provider might aim to increase the proportion of its projects with nature-positive components by a certain percentage each year or commit that by 2025 a specific amount of funding will go into nature-based solutions. Another target could be to phase out funding for certain harmful practices (like unsustainable logging or fossil-fuel-driven projects) and redirect those funds to restoration or sustainable alternatives. This incremental alignment can help providers deliver measurable ecological gains without compromising development goals.
- **Embedding biodiversity in governance and monitoring frameworks:** Providers could look into governance, accountability, and results frameworks to include biodiversity impact assessments. This means that not only environmental specialists, but also decision-making committees and evaluation units would start looking at how programmes affect nature. For instance, project approval templates could include a section on expected biodiversity outcomes, and completion reports could require reporting on actual nature impacts. By embedding these into standard procedures, biodiversity considerations become routine and expected, increasing institutional accountability for nature-positive results. Over time, the mainstreaming of biodiversity can support more systemic, portfolio-wide shifts in how development outcomes are defined and measured.
- **Prioritising high-risk areas:** It may make sense to tackle the most significant biodiversity risks and opportunities early. Providers could review their activities to identify projects or sectors with the greatest potential harm to biodiversity (e.g. large infrastructure, extractive industries) and focus on strengthening safeguards and enhancements in those areas as a priority. Conversely, they could identify where there is high potential for quick wins (e.g. a planned reforestation initiative) and ensure those get full support and visibility. Addressing the extremes first (biggest harms,

easiest wins) can yield immediate benefits and lessons. This dual strategy can demonstrate the feasibility and benefits of nature-positive action, even in challenging or high-impact contexts.

- **Evolving and phasing in new tools:** Recognising that tools like screening checklists, impact modeling, and monitoring protocols would need to evolve over time to accommodate the nature-positive objective. Initially, providers might rely on simpler ex-ante screening of projects for biodiversity considerations. As they develop more robust impact evaluation systems (perhaps through pilot projects or collaborations with experts), they could introduce more extensive *ex-post* assessments of actual outcomes. Because thorough biodiversity evaluations are resource-intensive and require long-term data, a gradual approach is warranted. For example, a provider could start by conducting in-depth biodiversity impact assessments on a handful of representative projects as case studies. The insights from those can help refine methodologies that later scale up to more projects (OECD, 2024^[92]). Over time – as seen in the example of France's AFD, which is piloting portfolio-wide biodiversity accounting – the goal would be to move from evaluating isolated projects to assessing and managing impacts across the entire portfolio. This evolution can build the technical foundation needed to operationalise nature-positive development at scale.

Ultimately, moving toward nature-positive development co-operation is about institutional learning and adaptation. Providers could approach it as a journey: begin by making commitments and small changes, monitor what works and what does not, and then incrementally integrate more sophisticated approaches. Along this journey, sharing experiences among development actors will be valuable – so that good practices and tools can be identified and standardised where possible. This transition needs to be realistic and phased. Early successes (even if modest) may help build confidence and support for scaling up ambition. At the same time, providers would need to be candid about the difficulties and be prepared to adjust their business model. Continuous collaboration with scientific bodies, international initiatives (like the Nature Positive Initiative), and partner countries can help in refining the approach. Nature-positive offers a powerful opportunity to align development finance with long-term ecological resilience, human well-being, and global sustainability goals. With sustained effort, development co-operation can increasingly align with and contribute to a nature-positive world – supporting global biodiversity recovery while also advancing sustainable development outcomes.

Annex A. Approaches to track development finance for biodiversity and nature

France

France's *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD) put forward a Sustainable Development Analysis and Opinion Mechanism to ensure that every project it finances is aligned with the SDGs (AFD, 2023^[93]). Through a sustainable development analysis grid (AFD, 2022^[94]), AFD qualifies each project's contribution to the SDGs across six cross-cutting dimensions (i.e. biodiversity, climate, social cohesion, gender, governance and economy). The grid provides specific criteria to estimate the project's impact, on a scale ranging from -2 (significant negative impact) to +3 (strong positive contribution). For biodiversity (i.e. biodiversity conservation, management of environment and natural resources) a project can:

- “significantly” degrade biodiversity and natural resources (-2).
- have residual impacts on biodiversity and natural resources (-1).
- have no negative or beneficial effect (0).
- have unintended and unproven positive impacts on biodiversity or natural resources, or a dialogue has been conducted on environmental issues (+1).
- help conserve biodiversity (+2).
- contribute to the restoration or structural improvement of biodiversity (+3).

In addition, the Mechanism provides detailed rating sub-criteria to better guide the assessment (i.e. ecosystem integrity, functionality and connectivity; sustainable use of natural resources; including communities in natural resource and ecosystem management; improving and sharing knowledge, data and technologies relevant to biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources; developing or consolidating a biodiversity-friendly policy, regulatory and governance framework). By applying this Mechanism, the positive impacts of projects can improve and those that could have a negative impact on one or more dimensions of sustainable development are excluded.

On biodiversity, the Mechanism takes into account AFD's Biodiversity Roadmap (AFD, 2021^[95]), which is aligned with the CBD, and AFD's Group exclusion list (AFD, 2022^[96]), which indicates the activities that the Group does not finance (e.g. trade, production, breeding or possession of endangered animals, plants or other natural products; fishing activities using a driftnet in excess of 2.5 km in length; research or multiplication of genetically modified seeds; production, use or trade of hazardous materials and all products which are banned in destination countries; transboundary trade of waste, except those consistent with the Basel Convention; operations with an adverse and reversible residual impact on a critical habitat; forest or agricultural projects that do not implement a zero-deforestation methodology).

AFD has also developed “Nature+ finance principles for tracking biodiversity and nature-positive finance” (AFD, 2022^[30]). The principles include standard criteria to assess the impact of investments on nature, and determine the alignment with protecting biodiversity and promoting a nature-positive economy, along six levers (i.e. protection, restoration, integrated spatial planning, policies and governance, sustainable management of resources, and ecological performance of investments). These levers include eligibility criteria and monitoring indicators. A weighting factor is applied to each project's lever, consisting of a

“biodiversity rate” to establish the relation between nature-positive impacts or co-benefits of an activity with a financial commitment for biodiversity. The progression of the biodiversity rates, ranging from 20% to 100%, reflects the hierarchy of pressures established by (IPBES, 2019^[70]). In addition, the principles state that a project generates a net gain, a nature-positive impact or biodiversity co-benefits if nature itself or the governance of biodiversity are improved within the physical area of influence of the project.

Beyond AFD, France has also developed an approach to identify the environmental impact of public expenditures and budgetary credits (e.g. domestic public and private finance mobilisation, international expenses, foreign aid for development) (Government of France, 2022^[97]), notably through a green budgeting methodology and tagging framework. The methodology identifies environmentally favourable, unfavourable, mixed and neutral budgetary credits, taxes and fiscal expenditures based on six environmental dimensions (i.e. climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, water management, circular economy, pollution and biodiversity). Regarding biodiversity, it includes the conservation, protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and the sustainable management of natural ecosystems, agricultural and forestry. On the other nature-related dimensions (i.e. pollution, water and circular economy), the methodology refers to the sustainable and efficient use of terrestrial and marine resources, as well as sustainable waste management and restoring environmental health (i.e. water, air and soil) resulting from pollution. The methodology then assigns a score ranging from -1 to 3 to each dimension, based on the impact of each expenditure. For example, for biodiversity, these are:

- -1 for negative, direct harms to the environment or unfavourable behaviours towards biodiversity.
- 0 for activities deemed neutral, having no significant effect on biodiversity.
- 1, 2, or 3 for positive activities when biodiversity is a principal objective or when activities have an indirect positive impact on it.
- a “non-classified/uncategorised/non-rating” classification also exists due to lack of scientific consensus on the environmental impact of an activity, or lack of reliable and sufficient data on overall favourable/unfavourable impact of an expenditure.

European Union

The European Union Taxonomy Regulation provides companies, investors and policymakers with definitions of economic activities that can be considered to be contributing substantially to the sustainable use and protection of natural resources, to the transition to a circular economy, to reducing pollution, or to the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems (European Commission, 2023^[98]). To determine whether an activity qualifies as contributing substantially to the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems and to determine whether that economic activity causes no significant harm to any of the other environmental objectives, it must comply with the technical screening criteria set out in Annex IV of the Regulation (European Commission, 2023^[99]). Annex IV describes the activities that fall under environmental protection and restoration activities, and accommodation activities, including e.g. conservation and restoration of ecosystems and natural habitats, excluding ex-situ conservation of biodiversity (e.g. botanical gardens, zoos, aquariums or seed banks) and biodiversity offsetting of impacts (i.e. only net biodiversity gains), minimisation and avoidance of the use of pesticides and fertilisers, compliance with good agricultural practices, the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Montreal Protocol, as well as sustainable supply chains and environmental management systems.

Netherlands

The Netherlands supported the development of a biodiversity footprint, the Biodiversity Footprint for Financial Institutions (BFFI), that calculates the positive or negative contributions of investments on biodiversity (CREM, PRé and Government of the Netherlands, 2019^[100]). It defines biodiversity-positive investments as investments resulting in net biodiversity conservation gain, either through averted loss and/or degradation of biodiversity and improving protection status, or through positive management actions (restoration, enhancement) that improve biodiversity (CREM, PRé and Government of the Netherlands, 2019^[100]). Further, investments can increase biodiversity (e.g. enhancement and restoration); reduce impacts (e.g. addressing drivers of biodiversity loss); avoid negative impacts (e.g. alternative livelihoods and green energy); and avert future risks (e.g. nature-related physical risks). Specifically, BFFI was used for the Netherlands' study as a methodological reference. Further, the BFFI method was also applied to investment cases, underlining the importance of locality and the role of climate change and land-use as drivers of biodiversity loss (PRé, CREM, and Government of the Netherlands, 2021^[101]), as well as highlighting synergies and trade-offs between climate and biodiversity in the context of the biodiversity-climate nexus (PRé, CREM, and Government of the Netherlands, 2022^[102]). Other approaches towards positive impacts are also discussed in (CREM, PRé and Government of the Netherlands, 2019^[100]).

International Finance Corporation

The IFC Biodiversity Finance Reference Guide (IFC, 2023^[103]) provides an indicative list of activities to guide institutions and investors towards investment opportunities and project components that help protect, maintain, or enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as promote the sustainable management of natural resources. The Guide maps investments eligible as biodiversity finance in three areas: biodiversity co-benefits; biodiversity conservation and/or restoration; and nature-based solutions. The guide is also a practical tool for policymakers to design biodiversity finance taxonomies and policies, contributing to the broader alignment with and mobilisation of financial flows to meet the KMGBF.

United Nations Development Programme

The UNDP Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) implements biodiversity expenditure reviews (BER) to inform and promote improved biodiversity policies, financing and outcomes. A domestic biodiversity expenditure is any expenditure with a positive impact on biodiversity, or that reduces or eliminates pressures on biodiversity. The BER classifies domestic biodiversity expenditures into nine categories (i.e. biodiversity awareness and knowledge, green economy, pollution management, sustainable use, biosafety, protected areas and other conservation measures, restoration, access and benefit sharing, biodiversity and development planning and finance). Further, the BER proposes a biodiversity budget coding protocol and tagging system, which draws on the OECD DAC Rio marker on biodiversity to attribute the contribution of expenditures to sustainable biodiversity management. This attribution system allocates a value of 100% to expenditures where biodiversity is the main intent and applies a range of possible percentages (e.g. 1%, 25% and 75%) when biodiversity is a secondary objective (UNDP, 2018^[104]).

Inter-American Development Bank

The IADB commissioned a report to provide technical guidance to support multilateral development banks in defining, tracking and reporting nature-positive investments (Trinomics and CPI, 2022^[105]). When working on defining nature-positive investments, the report stresses the importance on “the difference between nature-positive and nature safeguard activities indicating that nature-positive investments should

contribute to nature in contrast to the mitigation hierarchy that aims to minimise the harmful impacts on nature". As such, "nature-positive activities are those that maintain or enhance nature through implementing the activity itself, and not through the offsetting of its negative impacts". In addition, the methodology proposed by (Trinomics and CPI, 2022^[105]) reviews the use of taxonomy- and process-based screening approaches, and the combination of both, to identify eligible projects that contribute to nature-positive. The methodology proposes various attribution approaches using coefficients to determine the how a project contributes to nature-positive objectives or actions. (Trinomics and CPI, 2022^[105]) build upon approaches proposed by the OECD, AFD and UNDP BIOFIN.

Table A.1. Approaches to identify and track biodiversity- or nature-positive flows

Mechanism	Implications
AFD's Sustainable development analysis grid	Provides rating grid (-2 to +3) to assess an activity's negative, neutral and positive impacts Provides detailed rating sub-criteria allowing to relate CRS purpose codes to corresponding criteria Grid is focused on impacts, not expenditures or flows
AFD's exclusion list	Indicates which activities excluded and/or not aligned with sustainable development – with specific references to biodiversity, ecosystem services and other natural resources – thus allowing to identify nature-negative purpose codes
AFD's principles for tracking biodiversity and nature-positive finance	Provides biodiversity levers with specific eligibility criteria that can be used to identify nature-positive sectors, thus useful for identifying nature-positive purpose codes in the CRS Provides methodology to financially track a project's contribution to CBD goals by applying a weighting factor approach using "biodiversity rates". These rates depict the estimated contribution of an activity to biodiversity, which add complexity and uncertainty, given that the CRS provides data of projects already implemented by all DAC members, each having different approaches, theories of change, etc
France's green budgeting report	Provides a detailed description of environmental impacts of state expenditures, including on biodiversity. This is useful to adopt the rationale across the development finance flows within the CRS portfolio Provides a rating scale (-1 to +3) allowing to assess a project's negative, neutral and positive impacts Provides rationale behind scoring scale, allowing to extrapolate to the purpose codes in CRS
EU technical screening criteria	Provides conditions to determine whether an economic activity qualifies as contributing substantially to the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems Details the conditions for activities under environmental protection and restoration or accommodation Does not provide a more comprehensive list of activities beyond these Useful for positive screening of CRS activities only
CREM, PRé and the Government of the Netherlands report on positive impacts of financial institutions on biodiversity	Defines biodiversity-positive investments, useful to guide the identification of activities across the CRS Does not propose a mechanism to identify "biodiversity-positive", "biodiversity-neutral" or "biodiversity-negative expenditures"
IFC Biodiversity Finance Reference Guide	Provides key terms, definitions and criteria for an activity to qualify as biodiversity finance Maps biodiversity finance activities across three areas to identify eligible investment assets. This list can help understand positive contributions to biodiversity and nature across the CRS
UNDP BIOFIN biodiversity expenditure review	Provides a methodology to determine expenditure attribution to biodiversity by specifying biodiversity expenditure categories and applying a range of attribution levels to each category (0-100%) Useful to identify positive expenditures, although categories do not match exactly with CRS sectors.
Trinomics and Climate Policy Initiative methodology for MDBs	Provides useful insights to define and identify nature-positive investments, and makes a clear distinction between activities that contribute to nature-positive and nature safeguard activities. Does not provide concrete examples of applying the recommended methodologies
World Bank Group	The definitions of the World Bank used in the Finance for Nature Positive working model are as follows: (a) Nature Impact Mitigation Finance is finance for activities undertaken to address adverse impacts on nature in accordance with the Work Bank Group's Environmental and Social Framework and IFC and MIGA Performance Standards; (b) Nature Finance is defined as finance contributing to the nature-positive goal of halting and reversing nature loss and supporting the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework; (c) Nature Positive Finance is finance that is expected to deliver measurable positive outcomes for biodiversity or ecosystem services, relative to business-as-usual; and (d) Nature Mainstreaming Finance is finance that is expected to enable a broader economic transition toward practices aligned with delivering the nature-positive goal.
Nature Positive Initiative	In October 2024, the Nature Positive Initiative launched a consultation on State of Nature metrics to build a wide global consensus on a set of credible, practical metrics to measure nature-positive outcomes.

Source: Authors' elaboration, based on: (AFD, 2022^[94]; AFD, 2022^[96]; AFD, 2022^[30]; Government of France, 2022^[97]; European Commission, 2023^[99]; CREM, PRé and Government of the Netherlands, 2019^[100]; IFC, 2023^[103]; UNDP, 2018^[104]; Trinomics B.V & Climate Policy Initiative, 2022^[10]). Other methodologies exist (e.g. Exiobase, ENCORE, Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool, ReCiPe, Global Impact Database, GLOBIO, BioScope, Global Biodiversity Score, WWF Risk Filter, Natural Capital Protocol), but with limited use for development finance.

Annex B. An exploratory methodology to assess development finance portfolios through a nature lens

The exploratory methodology proposed in this report looks at the information found within the CRS to classify activities into: nature-focused, nature-mainstreaming, nature-additional, nature-residual and nature-at-risk. However, the OECD DAC CRS does not include any tag or field to track ODF pursuing activities that contribute positively or negatively to the nature-positive objective. At the same time, the CRS includes several ways to approximate such flows. For instance, countries and institutions reporting to the OECD on their ODF include biodiversity-related activities through the biodiversity Rio marker, as well as through two SDG tags (i.e. 14 for life under water and 15 for life on land).⁴ Information on the Rio marker for biodiversity and the SDGs can be found in (OECD, 2023^[106]). In addition, the methodology used nature-related information that was searched through keyword searches in the CRS; and by looking at CRS purpose codes that can also be classified according to whether they are related to biodiversity or not.

Keyword searches

As mentioned, beyond the use of the biodiversity Rio marker, purpose codes and SDGs, biodiversity-related information can be found in the CRS by applying a keyword search on merged descriptive data fields, such as project titles and descriptions (in English, French and Spanish). Doing so makes use of the full informative content of the database and increases the accuracy of the classification, while maintaining the integrity of the CRS database (see the list used in Table B.1).

Table B.1. Nature-related key words

Nature-focused English	Abandon mercure, abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear, adequate management of irrigation water, affected water bodies, afforestation, agricultural organic, agriculture biologique, agriculture sustainable, agri-environmental, agrobio, agroeco, agro-ecological, agro-ecosystems, Aichi, air pollution, air quality, ALDFG, alien species, anti-poaching, anti-snare, apes , aquatic resources restoration, ATSEA, Basel convention, betterment of the environment, bio corridor, Biocorridors,
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⁴ This methodology originally considered the use of additional SDGs to capture further data on nature. The SDG Handbook for statistical reporters provides guidance on how to identify and report on the SDGs in the CRS, as well as to decide whether a given target is related or not to biodiversity (OECD, 2022^[118]), which could have been a starting point to assess the relation of other SDGs with nature. Consequently, the following SDG targets could have been, in principle, relevant: 2.4; 2.5; 6.3; 6.4; 6.5; 6.6; 8.4; 12.1;12.2; 12.4; 12.5; 12.6; 12.7; 12.8. However, given limitations in the accuracy of reporting against these tags, and the resources needed to interpret the information reported, these additional SDGs were not used for the analysis. Further, climate-related SDGs were not considered to be automatically nature-focused activities. Indeed, as detailed in (OECD, 2024^[117]) and (Maron et al., 2021^[76]), while expenditures could be favourable for climate-related objectives, they could also be unfavourable for nature and biodiversity – and vice versa. Climate-related data that is relevant to nature, in essence, may be captured when commitments seek to explicitly obtain climate and nature objectives.

biocultural, biodiverse, biodiversity, bio-diversity, bioeconomy, BIOFIN, BIOFUND, biological diversity, biological corridor, biological corridor, biological resources, biopiracy, biosphere, biosphere reserve, bird conservation, birds trafficked, blue action fund, blue carbon, blue economy, blue planet, blue spaces, Bonn Challenge, botanic gardens, bushmeat, butterfly, bycatch, bycatch reduction, camera trap, caribbean biodiversity fund, Cartagena protocol, CBD, cetaceans, change consumption patterns, cheetah, chimpanzees, circular economy, circular model, circular plastics economy, Circular urban cultivation system, CITES, clean cooking solutions, cleanup efforts, climate-smart agriculture, coastal degradation, coastal erosion, coastal eutrophication, coastal habitat enhancement, coastal protected areas, coastal protection, coastal wetlands protection, combat wildlife, combating fish crimes, combating wildlife, combatting wildlife, commercial whaling, community conservation, community forest, confiscated animals, conservation agriculture, conservation and use of plant, conservation area, conservation forests, conservation landscape, conservation of animal genetic resources, conservation of aquatic ecosystems, conservation of grasslands, conservation of habitats and species, conservation of mangroves, conservation of migratory waterbirds, conservation of natural resources, conservation of nature, conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah, conservation of wetlands, conservation of wildcats, conservation project, conserve forest, conserving aquatic, conserving ecosystems services, contaminants in soil, contaminated river, contaminated soil, contamination in soil, control wildfire, coral bleaching, coral reef, crocodiles, cryosphere, Darwin Fellowship, decreasing erosion, defenders of the environment, deforestation, degradation of forests, degraded ecosystems, degraded forest, degraded landscape, dehorning, demining, depollution, desertification, dietary shifts, dolphin, ear-notching, Eco tourism, ecoconstruction, eco-industrial park, eco-justice, ecological connectivity, ecological conservation, ecological construction, ecological farming, ecological footprint, ecological integrity, ecological protection, ecological resilience, ecological restoration, ecologistics, ECO-refrigerant, ecosystem approach, ecosystem conservation, ecosystem functions and services, ecosystem rehabilitation, ecosystem restoration, ecosystem-based adaptation, Ecosystem-based approach, ecosystem-based management, ecosystems goods and services, ecosystems protection, eco-technologies, ecotourism, effective conservation and sustainable exploitation of marine resources, efficient thought waste sorting, efficient use of the marine resources, elephant, elimination of mercury, endangered species, endangered wildlife, enhancement of natural, environment rehabilitation, environmental conservation, environmental crime, environmental damage, environmental degradation, environmental education, environmental health, environmental impact assessments, environmental law, Environmental Partnership, environmental pollution, environmental preservation, environmental restoration, environmental stewardship, environmentally friendly agriculture, environmentally sensitive areas, environmentally-friendly, excessive exploitation of natural resources and fishing, Exclusive Economic Zone, farmland sustainable utilisation, fast fashion, Fauna and Flora International, fauna corridor, field patrolling and monitoring, fight wildlife, fin fish, fish sanctuaries, fisheries crime, fisheries intelligence, fishing for plastic, FLEGT, food loss, food waste, forest and landscape restoration, forest biome, forest communities, forest conservation, forest cover, forest crime, forest ecology, forest ecosystem, Forest Enrichment, forest fragmentation, forest governance, forest health, forest landscape restoration, forest legality, forest peoples, forest protection, forest resource development, forest restoration, forest-dependent peoples, forest-dependent peoples, forestry and conservation, forests and protected areas, fragile ecosystems, fragile lands, freshwater turtles, Ghost Gear, gibbons, glacier protection, global biodiversity framework, goal 14, goal 15, good agricultural practices, gorilla, green infrastructure, green space, groundwater recharge, habitat conservation, habitat loss, habitat restoration, habitats and species, harmonize environmental conditions, hawk, healthy forest, healthy ocean, hippo , hippo, Hot spots, human tiger, human wildlife, human-animal, human-big cats conflict, human-elephant, human-environment interactions, human-jaguar, human-large carnivores, human-wildlife, human-wildlife conflict, human-wildlife interactions, human-wolves conflict, hunting practices, hunting the hunters, HyCRISTAL , iguanas, illegal chainsaw, illegal charcoal, illegal crop, illegal deforestation, illegal dumping, illegal fish, illegal fishing, illegal forest, illegal forest encroachment, illegal hunt, illegal hunting, illegal ivory, illegal killing, illegal logging, illegal supply chain, illegal timber, illegal trafficking of wildlife, illegal use of forest, illegal use of forest resources, illegal waste, illegal wildlife, illegal wildlife trade, illegal-traded wildlife products, Impacts of Plastics, improve the state of the environment, improve water governance and management, improved water governance, improvement of management of landfill sites, improving natural water systems, indigenous lands, indigenous landscapes, indigenous territories, intact areas, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, international trafficking of wildlife, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Interpol fisheries crime, invasive alien species, invasive species, IPBES, IUCN, IUU , IUU fishing, ivory markets, ivory trade chain, IWT, jaguar, jaguar-cattle conflict, KBAs , kelp, key indicator species, killing of jaguars, lake conservation, land and ecosystem management, land and water conservation, land degradation, land protect, land resources, land restoration, land use and restoration, landscape conservation, landscape restoration, lasting water resources, legal timber, leopard, lion , lizards, Long-term erosion, macaws, Make Our Planet Great Again, management of fishing gear, manatee, mangrove, mangrove forests, mangrove restoration, marine debris, marine litter, marine plastic, marine plastics, marine pollution, marine protection zone, marine sanctuary, marine turtle, market for ivory, mercury, migratory species, Minamata Convention, mine free, mining rehabilitation, Nagoya Protocol, national park, National Park, national wildlife sanctuary, national park, native forest, native species, native tree, Natural capital, natural climate solution, natural forest, natural habitat, natural heritage, natural infrastructure, natural resource conservation, natural resource management, natural resource management practices, natural-capita, nature based tourism, nature conservation, nature positive, nature preservation, nature protection, nature reserve, nature-based solutions, NBSAPs, negative environmental impact, noise

	pollution, non-invasive exploration techniques, nutrient management, ocean plastic, Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange, Open Dump Site, orangutan, orang-utan, organic agriculture, organic cereal, organic certification, organic coffee, organic farm, Organic farming, organically biodegradable waste, overconsumption, overexploitation, overexploitation of natural areas, over-fishing, ozone depletion, pangolin, park encroachment, park management, payment for environmental services, payment for nature, payment for watershed services, payments for ecosystem services, peatland restoration, permaculture, planet focused, planet-compatible consumption, plant-based diet, plastic pollution, plastic recycling, plastic waste, plastics pact, poaching, pollinator, pollution monitoring, porpoises, post-mining rehabilitation, predator, preservation of the environment, preserve water resources, preserving and sustainably managing the natural resources, preserving natural resources, pressure on natural resources, preventing destruction of agricultural lands, preventing forest loss, PROBLUE, proper management of water resources, protect forests, protect the natural environment, protect tropical forests, protected area, protected fishing, Protected Fishing Zones, protecting the environment, protecting wildlife, protection of its natural resources, protection of mangroves, protection of sensitive ecosystems, protection of the environment, protection zone parks, rainforest, Ramsar, rangeland recovery, recovery of forests, recovery of natural capital, recyclable materials, recycling of plastic, reduce charcoal, reduce environmental degradation, reduce its overall pollution, reduce pollution, reduce wood fuel, reduced-impact logging, reducing vulnerability of natural resource, reduction of pollution from manufacturing industries, reduction of soil erosion, reef restoration, reef species, reforestation, reform of fossil-fuel subsidies, regenerative agriculture, regenerative farming, Rehabilitation of the local rivers, Rehabilitation of waterways, remediate land-use change, remediation, remediation of contaminants, removal of emerging pollutants, Research on drought, Reserved Forests, resilience of fisheries, resilience of wetlands, resilient agriculture, resilient agroforestry, resilient fisheries, resilient landscape, resource conservation, resource efficient, responsible fishing, responsible supply chains for minerals, responsibly sourced gold, restoration of coral, restore and protect water-related ecosystems, restore forests, restoring forest, revitalising the ecosystem, rhino, Ridge-to-reef conservation, right of nature, Rotterdam convention, sandpiper, sargassum, sdg 14, sdg 15, SDG 15.7, sdg14, sdg15, sdg15.7, sea pollution, sea turtle, seabird, seagrass, seagrass conservation, seas sustainable management, shorebird, skin trade, Smart Packaging Waste Management, snare, sniffer dog, snowy plover, soil conservation, soil degradation, soil fertility, soil restoration, species extinctions, Stockholm convention, sustainability of mangrove, sustainable agriculture, sustainable agri-enterprises, sustainable and socially acceptable fish, sustainable aqua, Sustainable Aquaculture, sustainable bio-energy, sustainable biomass, sustainable catchment, sustainable coastal, sustainable consumption, sustainable cropland, sustainable crops, sustainable cultivation, sustainable development of natural resources, sustainable dryland, sustainable farming, sustainable fish, sustainable fishing, sustainable food, sustainable forest, sustainable fuelwood management, sustainable game management, sustainable harvest, sustainable industrial development, sustainable land, sustainable land use, sustainable landscape, sustainable livestock, sustainable management of bycatch, sustainable management of fisheries, sustainable management of forest, sustainable management of lakes, sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable management of nitrogen, sustainable management of peatland, sustainable management of tuna, sustainable management of wildlife, sustainable mangrove management, sustainable marine, sustainable materials, sustainable natural, sustainable soil, Sustainable Sources of High-Quality Rice Seeds, sustainable sourcing, sustainable sourcing certification, sustainable supply chain, sustainable supply chains for marine commodities, sustainable timber, sustainable tourism, sustainable use and management of natural resources, sustainable use of natural resource, sustainable use of peatland, sustainable use of PGRFA, sustainable use of resources, sustainable utilisation of plant genetic resources, sustainable waste management, Sustainable Water Technologies, sustainable watershed, sustainable wildlife management, sustainably managed water systems, sustainably managing the natural, sustainably sourced, tapir , targeted hunting, terrestrial protected area, threat to rhinos, threatened species, tiger, tiger-human conflict, trafficking of birds, trafficking of ivory, trafficking of wild flora, trafficking of wildlife, tree cover, tree protection zone, turtle trafficking, unreported and unregulated fishing, vaquita, vulnerable ecosystems, waste pollution, waste reduction, water conservation, water pollution, water protection, water resources conservation, water stewardship, watershed conservation, watershed rehabilitation, wetland ecosystem, wetland protected, wetland protection, wetlands conservation, wetlands conservation, whale, whale conservation, whaling, wild meat, wild species, wildfire management, wildlife conservancy, wildlife conservation, wildlife corridor, wildlife crime, Wildlife Cybercrime, wildlife enforcement, wildlife law, wildlife management, wildlife management areas, wildlife protection, Wildlife Reserve, wildlife sanctuary, wildlife smuggling, wildlife trade, wildlife trafficking, wilson's plover, wood identification, woodland restoration, WWF, zebra, zero waste
Nature-at-risk English	automotive fuel, build a route, build waste water systems, coal, coal mining, coal-fired, coastal development, constructing, constructing road, construction of irrigation reservoirs, construction of reservoir dam, construction of small village, dam, deep sea mining, diesel, drift net fishing, drilling, drilling water holes, expansion of railway routes, extractive industry, extractive sector, extractives sector, fishery harbour, flood control, fossil energy, gas station, gas usage, gas-fired, gasoline, Green Revolution, highway, hydro-electric, hydroelectric plants, hydropower, improve connectivity and accessibility, improve traffic access, improving a road, Infrastructure Development, infrastructure investments, infrastructure project development, installing pumps, irrigation, land connection, LNG railway, long lasting insecticide, marine e-tech, mining, monoculture, ocean freight shipping, oil and gas, oil expansion, oil processing, oil products, palm oil, pesticides, petrol , petroleum, Petroleum Management, petroleum sector, petroleum sector, providing fuel oil, pump wells, pumping station,

	railway development, railway infrastructure, raw materials, road improvement, road maintenance, road network connectivity, road rehabilitation, road transport, rural roads, school construction, submarine cable, syngas , telecommunication cables, telecommunication infrastructure, undersea cable, undersea telecommunications cable, urban agglomeration, urban Infrastructure, urban transport, urban water supply systems activity, water retention
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Source: The list of keywords was derived from a literature review and through the review of common words used in the CRS database of nature-marked projects. Adapted from (OECD, 2023^[106]).

Purpose code classification

In the CRS, data on the sector of outflows' destination are recorded using purpose codes (OECD, n.d.^[107]), reflecting the specific area of the recipient's economic or social structure that the transfer is intended to foster. Some contributions are not susceptible to allocation by sector and are reported as non-sector allocable aid. After filtering by the biodiversity Rio marker, the SDGs 14 and 15, and applying the keyword search, a final filter is applied to the remaining activities using purpose codes, which are classified and assigned a nature-related tag, as per Table B.2.

Table B.2. Nature tagging by purpose codes

Purpose code	Description	Nature tagging	Rationale
Education			
Education, Level Unspecified			
11110	Education policy and administrative management	0	Research, education and training without specific impact on environment is residual, following the logic of (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
11120	Education facilities and training	0	
11130	Teacher training	0	
11182	Educational research	0	
Basic Education			
11220	Primary education	0	
11230	Basic life skills for adults	0	
11231	Basic life skills for youth	0	
11232	Primary education equivalent for adults	0	
11240	Early childhood education	0	
11250	School feeding	0	No effect on the enhancement and sharing of scientific knowledge and relevant technologies for biodiversity is considered residual, following (AFD, 2022 ^[94]).
11260	Lower secondary education	0	
Secondary Education			
11320	Upper Secondary Education (modified and includes data from 11322)	0	
11330	Vocational training	0	
Post-Secondary Education			
11420	Higher education	0	
11430	Advanced technical and managerial training	0	
Health			
Health, General			
12110	Health policy and administrative management	0	Aid for policies, regulations, administrative support, and human resources is considered residual, following the logic in (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
12196	Health statistics and data	0	
12181	Medical education/training	0	
12182	Medical research	0	

12191	Medical services	0	Health-related support, including research, education and training without specific impact on environment is residual, following the logic in (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
Basic Health			
12220	Basic health care	0	
12230	Basic health infrastructure	0	
12240	Basic nutrition	0	
12250	Infectious disease control	0	
12261	Health education	0	
12262	Malaria control	0	
12263	Tuberculosis control	0	
12264	COVID-19 control	0	
12281	Health personnel development	0	
Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)			
12310	NCDs control, general	0	
12320	Tobacco use control	0	
12330	Control of harmful use of alcohol and drugs	0	
12340	Promotion of mental health and well-being	0	
12350	Other prevention and treatment of NCDs	0	
12382	Research for prevention and control of NCDs	0	
Population Policies/Programmes & Reproductive Health			
13010	Population policy and administrative management	0	Household and social aid without specific impact on environment is considered residual, following the logic in (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
13096	Population statistics and data	0	
13020	Reproductive health care	0	
13030	Family planning	0	
13040	STD control including HIV/AIDS	0	
13081	Personnel development for population and reproductive health	0	
Water Supply & Sanitation			
14010	Water sector policy and administrative management	0	Personnel working towards water and biodiversity policies is nature-related, following (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]). However, water sector policy and administrative management needs to be determined on a case-by-case basis.
14015	Water resources conservation (including data collection)	0	
14020	Water supply and sanitation - large systems	-	High materiality and pressure on nature, following (SBTN, 2020 ^[108]). Must be evaluated within context, can be focused, mainstreaming or additional, as well as residual, following (Government of France, 2022 ^[97])
14021	Water supply - large systems	-	
14022	Sanitation - large systems	-	
14030	Basic drinking water supply and basic sanitation	-	
14031	Basic drinking water supply		Approaches aimed at improving the sustainability of exploited natural resources (in quantitative or qualitative terms): integrated and sustainable management of water resources at the level of a catchment area, a mountain range, a bio-geographical sector or a territory is nature-focused, following (AFD, 2022 ^[94]).
14032	Basic sanitation	0	
14040	River basins development	0	
14050	Waste management/disposal	0	
14081	Education and training in water supply and sanitation	0	Personnel working towards water and sanitation policies can be seen as nature-focused, mainstreaming or additional, following (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
Government & Civil Society			

Government & Civil Society-general			
15110	Public sector policy and administrative management	0	Foreign aid, social support, policies, regulations, personnel, administration support without specific impact on environment, are considered residual to nature, following (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
15121	Foreign affairs	0	
15122	Diplomatic missions	0	
15123	Administration of developing countries' foreign aid	0	
15124	General personnel services	0	
15126	Other general public services	0	
15127	National monitoring and evaluation	0	
15143	Meteorological services	0	
15144	National standards development	0	
15154	Executive office	0	
15196	Government and civil society statistics and data	0	
15111	Public finance management (PFM)	0	
15117	Budget planning	0	
15118	National audit	0	
15119	Debt and aid management	0	
15112	Decentralisation and support to subnational government	0	
15128	Local government finance	0	
15129	Other central transfers to institutions	0	
15185	Local government administration	0	
15113	Anti-corruption organisations and institutions	0	
15114	Domestic revenue mobilisation	0	
15116	Tax collection	0	
15155	Tax policy and administration support	0	
15156	Other non-tax revenue mobilisation	0	
15125	Public Procurement	0	
15130	Legal and judicial development	0	
15131	Justice, law and order policy, planning and administration	0	
15132	Police	0	
15133	Fire and rescue services	0	
15134	Judicial affairs	0	
15135	Ombudsman	0	
15136	Immigration	0	
15137	Prisons	0	
15142	Macroeconomic policy	0	
15150	Democratic participation and civil society	0	
15151	Elections	0	
15152	Legislatures and political parties	0	
15153	Media and free flow of information	0	
15160	Human rights	0	
15170	Women's rights organisations and movements, and government institutions	0	
15180	Ending violence against women and girls	0	

15190	Facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility	0	
Conflict, Peace & Security			
15210	Security system management and reform	0	Social aid, support to crisis, without specific impact on environment, and in the absence of alternatives with more favorable environmental footprints, are considered residual, following (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
15220	Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution	0	
15230	Participation in international peacekeeping operations	0	
15240	Reintegration and SALW control	0	
15250	Removal of land mines and explosive remnants of war	0	
15261	Child soldiers (prevention and demobilisation)	0	No involvement of affected populations in any action to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity is considered residual, following (AFD, 2022 ^[94]).
Other Infrastructure & Social Services			
16010	Social Protection	0	Household and social aid without specific impact on environment is considered residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
16011	Social protection and welfare services policy, planning and administration	0	
16012	Social security (excl pensions)	0	
16013	General pensions	0	
16014	Civil service pensions	0	
16015	Social services (incl youth development and women+ children)	0	No involvement of affected populations in any action to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity is considered residual, according to (AFD, 2022 ^[94]).
16020	Employment creation	0	
16030	Housing policy and administrative management	0	
16040	Low-cost housing	-	If linked to artificialisation of soils, hence places nature-at-risk for biodiversity, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]). Alternatively, would benefit from a case-by-case analysis to understand the end objective (e.g. slum clearance, vertical vs. horizontal buildings, green urban space).
16050	Multisector aid for basic social services	0	Household and social aid, and culture promotion, without specific impact on environment are considered residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
16061	Culture and recreation	0	
16065	Recreation and sport	0	
16066	Culture	0	
16062	Statistical capacity building	0	
16063	Narcotics control	0	
16064	Social mitigation of HIV/AIDS	0	
16070	Labour rights	0	
16080	Social dialogue	0	
Transport & Storage			
21010	Transport policy and administrative management	0	Aid for policies, regulations, administrative support, and human resources are considered residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
21011	Transport policy, planning and administration	-	
21012	Public transport services	-	
21013	Transport regulation	-	
21020	Road transport	-	Strong pressure on biodiversity, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]) and (IFC, 2023 ^[103]). Unless sustainable use and management are proven
21021	Feeder road construction	-	
21022	Feeder road maintenance	-	

21023	National road construction	-	through the different steps or manual verification (e.g. seeking for elements such as rehabilitation of roads), will be considered as placing nature-at-risk for biodiversity, and at most nature-residual.
21024	National road maintenance	-	
21030	Rail transport	-	
21040	Water transport	-	
21050	Air transport	-	
21061	Storage	-	
21081	Education and training in transport and storage	0	Research, education and training without specific impact on environment are residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
Communications			
22010	Communications policy and administrative management	0	Support to press, media, and audiovisual activities, are residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
22011	Communications policy, planning and administration	0	
22012	Postal services	0	
22013	Information services	0	
22020	Telecommunications	0	
22030	Radio/television/print media	0	
22040	Information and communication technology (ICT)	-	
Energy			
Energy Policy			
23110	Energy policy and administrative management	0	Aid for policies, administrative support, and human resources are considered residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
23111	Energy sector policy, planning and administration	-	
23112	Energy regulation	-	
23181	Energy education/training	0	No effect on the creation of standards or regulations, nor on the enhancement and sharing of scientific knowledge and relevant technologies, for nature are residual, according to (AFD, 2022 ^[94]).
23182	Energy research	0	
23183	Energy conservation and demand-side efficiency	-	
Energy generation, renewable sources			
23210	Energy generation, renewable sources - multiple technologies	-	Avoidance of negative impacts on biodiversity and investments in reduced-impact resources would benefit from a net-impact analysis on biodiversity (CREM, PRé and Government of the Netherlands, 2019 ^[100]). While environmental safeguards and mitigation hierarchies could be used, given the limited information within project descriptions, these activities will be considered as nature-residual. Indeed, if inappropriately managed, such as wind energy developments, renewable energy deployments could lead to biodiversity loss (e.g. mortality of birds and bats) (IPBES, 2019 ^[70]).
23220	Hydro-electric power plants	-	
23230	Solar energy for centralised grids	-	
23231	Solar energy for isolated grids and standalone systems	-	
23232	Solar energy - thermal applications	-	
23240	Wind energy	-	
23250	Marine energy	-	
23260	Geothermal energy	-	
23270	Biofuel-fired power plants	-	Biofuel-fired power plants can place nature at risk (e.g. if using monocrops or large-scale exotic tree plantations). In particular, biofuels could have negative consequences for biodiversity if their cultivation is implies displacing food production elsewhere, and leading to loss of natural habitats and soil degradation (IPBES, 2019 ^[70]).
Energy generation, non-renewable sources			
23310	Energy generation, non-renewable sources, unspecified	-	Priority sub-industries given potential high intense impacts on biodiversity, considered to place nature at
23320	Coal-fired electric power plants	-	

23330	Oil-fired electric power plants	-	risk, based on (UNEP; UNEP FI; Global Canopy, 2020 ^[109]). Projects to construct, extend or refurbish fossil fuel-fired power plants should be excluded, hence place nature at risk, following (AFD, 2022 ^[96]).
23340	Natural gas-fired electric power plants	-	
23350	Fossil fuel electric power plants with carbon capture and storage (CCS)	-	
23360	Non-renewable waste-fired electric power plants	-	
Hybrid energy plants			
23410	Hybrid energy electric power plants	-	
Nuclear energy plants			
23510	Nuclear energy electric power plants and nuclear safety	-	Control on nuclear security and radioprotection has a residual impact on nature, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97])
Energy distribution			
23610	Heat plants	-	Priority sub-industries given potential high intense impacts on biodiversity, considered to place nature at risk by (UNEP; UNEP FI; Global Canopy, 2020 ^[109]).
23620	District heating and cooling	-	
23630	Electric power transmission and distribution (centralised grids)	-	
23631	Electric power transmission and distribution (isolated mini-grids)	-	
23640	Retail gas distribution	-	
23641	Retail distribution of liquid or solid fossil fuels	-	
23642	Electric mobility infrastructures	-	
Banking & Financial Services			
24010	Financial policy and administrative management	0	Aid without concerning sectors with specific environmental impacts, are considered residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
24020	Monetary institutions	0	
24030	Formal sector financial intermediaries	0	
24040	Informal/semi-formal financial intermediaries	0	
24050	Remittance facilitation, promotion and optimisation	0	
24081	Education/training in banking and financial services	0	
Business & Other Services			
25010	Business policy and administration	0	
25020	Privatisation	0	
25030	Business development services	0	
25040	Responsible business conduct	0	
Agriculture			
31110	Agricultural policy and administrative management	0	Strong pressure on nature is likely. Unless sustainable use and management, and ensuring zero-deforestation, are proven (e.g. minimising the use of pesticides and fertilisers and favouring alternative approaches, complying with good agricultural practices, preventing pollution of water and soil), will be considered to place nature at risk, following (IFC, 2023 ^[103]) (European Commission, 2023 ^[99]) (European Commission, 2023 ^[99]) (AFD, 2022 ^[96]).
31120	Agricultural development	-	
31130	Agricultural land resources	-	
31140	Agricultural water resources	-	
31150	Agricultural inputs	-	
31161	Food crop production	-	
31162	Industrial crops/export crops	-	Actions to preserve cultivated biodiversity, support ecological transition (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]), enhancing biodiversity or halting or preventing the degradation of ecosystems, deforestation and habitat
31163	Livestock	-	
31164	Agrarian reform	-	
31165	Agricultural alternative development	-	
31166	Agricultural extension	-	

31181	Agricultural education/training	0	loss (European Union, 2020 ^[110]), conserving and restoring forest and agricultural landscapes (AFD, 2022 ^[96]), promoting agro-ecological practices at a plot, family farm and value chain level, developing local and endemic species, combating soil degradation and artificialization (AFD, 2022 ^[94]), and encouraging sustainable development and production, are considered to be nature focused, mainstreaming or additional.
31182	Agricultural research	0	
31191	Agricultural services	-	
31192	Plant and post-harvest protection and pest control	-	
31193	Agricultural financial services	-	
31194	Agricultural co-operatives	0	
31195	Livestock/veterinary services	0	Research, education and training specifying sustainable development objectives related to biodiversity and the environment are nature focused, mainstreaming or additional, following (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
Forestry			
31210	Forestry policy and administrative management	0	
31220	Forestry development	-	
31261	Fuelwood/charcoal	-	
31281	Forestry education/training	0	
31282	Forestry research	0	
31291	Forestry services	-	
Fishing			
31310	Fishing policy and administrative management	0	
31320	Fishery development	-	Industrialisation and deployment, support to businesses, without specific mention to environmental impacts are residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97])
31381	Fishery education/training	0	
31382	Fishery research	0	
31391	Fishery services	-	
Industry			
32110	Industrial policy and administrative management	0	
32120	Industrial development	-	
32130	Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) development	0	
32140	Cottage industries and handicraft	-	
32161	Agro-industries	-	
32162	Forest industries	-	
32163	Textiles, leather and substitutes	-	
32164	Chemicals	-	
32165	Fertilizer plants	-	
32166	Cement/lime/plaster	-	Strong pressure on nature is possible. Unless sustainable use and management are proven (IFC, 2023 ^[103]), while ensuring the prevention and control of pollution regarding use and presence of chemicals (European Commission, 2023 ^[99]), will be considered to place nature at risk.
32167	Energy manufacturing (fossil fuels)	-	
32168	Pharmaceutical production	-	
32169	Basic metal industries	-	
32170	Non-ferrous metal industries	-	
32171	Engineering	-	
32172	Transport equipment industry	-	
32173	Modern biofuels manufacturing	-	
32174	Clean cooking appliances manufacturing	+	
32182	Technological research and development	0	
Mineral Resources & Mining			Strong pressure on nature is possible. Unless sustainable use and management are proven, will be considered to place nature at risk, following. (IFC, 2023 ^[103]).
32210	Mineral/mining policy and administrative management	-	
32220	Mineral prospection and exploration	-	
32261	Coal	-	

32262	Oil and gas (upstream)	-	Exploitation of diamond mines and marketing of diamonds in countries that have not adhered to the Kimberley Process should be excluded, hence placing nature at risk, following (AFD, 2022 ^[96]).
32263	Ferrous metals	-	
32264	Nonferrous metals	-	
32265	Precious metals/materials	-	
32266	Industrial minerals	-	
32267	Fertilizer minerals	-	
32268	Offshore minerals	-	
Construction			
32310	Construction policy and administrative management	0	Regulation, technical policies and construction quality are residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
Trade Policies & Regulations			
33110	Trade policy and administrative management	0	Aid for policies, administrative support, and human resources are considered residual to nature, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]), and nature focused, mainstreaming or additional if it contributes to international environmental objectives.
33120	Trade facilitation	-	Trade is considered as an underlying cause – indirect driver of change - of biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. Increased interconnectedness can lead to increased inequalities, while placing nature at risk (IPBES, 2019 ^[70]).
33130	Regional trade agreements (RTAs)	-	
33140	Multilateral trade negotiations	-	
33150	Trade-related adjustment	-	
33181	Trade education/training	0	Research, education and training without specific impact on environment are residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
Tourism			
33210	Tourism policy and administrative management	-	Strong pressure on nature is possible. Unless proving contribution and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as sustainable use and management of natural resources, will be considered to place nature at risk, following (European Commission, 2023 ^[99]) (IFC, 2023 ^[103])
General Environment Protection*			
41010	Environmental policy and administrative management	0	Finance considered to be nature focused if biodiversity is a primary objective (IFC, 2023 ^[103]), and when supporting the environmental protection, restoration and conservation of land-freshwater-marine biodiversity and ecosystems, preventing the introduction of invasive alien species or managing their spread (European Commission, 2023 ^[99]), addressing wildlife trafficking, environmental law enforcement (European Union, 2020 ^[110]), as well as when targeting environmental-related services and administration objectives (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
41020	Biosphere protection	+	
41030	Biodiversity	+	
41040	Site preservation	0	
41081	Environmental education/training	0	
41082	Environmental research	0	Site preservation within this context is considered to be residual to nature, given the high presence of activities related to cultural heritage and/or archeological sites. Approaches aimed at improving scientific knowledge of the country's biodiversity in the long term (stronger inventory, monitoring and evaluation systems), and at their inclusion in sectoral decisions (decision-making tools) are nature focused, mainstreaming or residual, following (AFD, 2022 ^[94]).
Other Multisector			
43010	Multisector aid	Unspecified	

43030	Urban development and management	-	Artificialisation of land and modification of ecosystems located in anthropised areas are considered nature at risk. Aid to personnel and administrative processes are considered residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]) (AFD, 2022 ^[94]).
43031	Urban land policy and management	0	
43032	Urban development	-	
43040	Rural development	-	
43041	Rural land policy and management	0	
43042	Rural development	-	
43050	Non-agricultural alternative development	-	Social aid and actions to guarantee food security and quality, as well as nutrition, are residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
43060	Disaster Risk Reduction	0	
43071	Food security policy and administrative management	0	
43072	Household food security programmes	0	
43073	Food safety and quality	0	
43081	Multisector education/training	0	Research, education and training without specific impact on environment are residual, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).
43082	Research/scientific institutions	0	
Emergency Response			Foreign action where impact is mainly residual on the environment, according to (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]) No involvement of affected populations in any action to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity is residual, according to (AFD, 2022 ^[94]).
72010	Material relief assistance and services	0	
72011	Basic Health Care Services in Emergencies	0	
72012	Education in emergencies	0	
72040	Emergency food assistance	0	
72050	Relief co-ordination and support services	0	
Reconstruction Relief & Rehabilitation			
73010	Immediate post-emergency reconstruction and rehabilitation	0	
Disaster Prevention & Preparedness			
74020	Multi-hazard response preparedness	0	
Unallocated / Unspecified			Non-classified/unspecified must be determined on a case-by-case basis (Government of France, 2022 ^[97]).. By default will be unspecified.
99810	Sectors not specified	Unspecified	
Non-sector allocable captured with allocable co-operation modalities	E.g. 51010, 52010, 53030, 53040, 60010, 91010, 93010, 99820.	Unspecified	

Note: (-) = nature at risk, 0 = nature-residual, (+) = nature-focused, mainstreaming or additional. Please note that this classification is applied only after activities have been screened and, as such, multiple objectives could be reflected within one same sector. Consequently, for example, activities marked as nature-focused could be re-classified into nature-additional if the activity is found to be overlapping with a negative element, and activities marked as residual could be re-classified into other categories, accordingly.

Source: Author's elaboration based on: (European Commission, 2023^[111]; Government of France, 2022^[97]; EFRAG, 2022^[112]; IFC, 2023^[103]; CREM, PRé and Government of the Netherlands, 2019^[100]; UNEP; UNEP FI; Global Canopy, 2020^[109]; European Union, 2020^[110]; AFD, 2022^[96]; AFD, 2022^[94]; OECD, 2021^[113]) (OECD, 2021^[114]).

Other elements of the analysis

Modalities covered

The Rio markers should be used only for allocable flows, which are defined through a set of development co-operation modalities: A02 (sector budget support), B01 (core support to NGOs), B03 (specific funds managed by international organisation), B04 (pooled funding), C01 (projects), D01 (provider country personnel), D02 (other technical assistance) and E01 (scholarships in providers). The analysis therefore

excludes flows under general budget support, core contributions to multilateral organisations, imputed student costs, debt relief operations, and in-donor costs (e.g. administrative), development awareness activities and refugee costs).

Concepts and protocol

Tracking the contribution of development finance to nature

The OECD DAC CRS dataset does not, at present, directly identify ODF flows that contribute to nature-positive objectives. Further, there is no requirement to mention the nature-positive objective within CRS project descriptions nor to indicate the contribution to biodiversity and/or nature of all activities. Only the Rio marker on biodiversity officially allows to identify commitments of DAC members to conserve, restore and sustainably use biodiversity, which could be seen as contributing to a nature-positive pathway (ex-ante, at the commitment level of a development finance flow). However, not all nature-related subjects, for example those related to desertification or the environment, are always captured through the biodiversity Rio marker. Indeed, DAC members regard differently what can encompass the concept of biodiversity, thus using the marker differently (Casado-Asensio, Blaquier and Gualberti, 2024^[89]).

Given these limitations, and the need to better understand the broader contribution of DAC members to nature, the OECD DAC Secretariat developed the present methodology. The methodology is applied to the sector-allocable portion of ODF (i.e. excluding ODF elements such as general budget support, debt relief, emergency aid). With this methodology, the Secretariat prepared a portfolio-level analysis of DAC members. To assess the alignment of ODF with nature, the methodology derived classifications:

- Nature-focused activities are identified by the use of explicit biodiversity-related identifiers reported by members, mainly the principal component of the biodiversity Rio marker.
- Nature-mainstreaming activities are identified by using significant component of the biodiversity Rio marker as well as retained activities reported with the SDG 14 and/or SDG 15 tags.
- Nature-additional activities, mainly addressing the underlying drivers of nature loss, are identified with a nature-related keyword search on project descriptions (Table B.1) when also having (+) in the purpose code nature-classification (Table B.2). Given that these activities had not been originally reported with the official tags, they are considered as nature-positive additional.
- Nature-at-risk activities (i.e. where direct impacts could potentially be negative on nature) are identified through a negative keyword search (e.g. coal-fired power plant, strengthening the productivity of oil products, infrastructure such as irrigation canals and flood defence, construction of roads, see Table B.1), and through the (-) purpose codes that put pressure on nature (Table B.2). Examples can be found in a wide variety of sectors, e.g. fisheries (e.g. industrial extraction, aquaculture and mariculture); agriculture (e.g. grazing, monocultures, fertilisation); industrial roundwood harvest; harvesting marine and terrestrial wild plants and animals (e.g. subsistence, bushmeat, game hunting); mining (e.g. conflicts and illegality, gold mining and impacts on biodiversity hotspots, ocean mining as offshore oil and gas installations and expansion); infrastructure (e.g. dams, roads, cities); tourism (e.g. transport and food consumption); or transportation (e.g. airborne and seaborne) (IPBES, 2019^[70]).
- ODF activities with a residual impact on nature are identified by reviewing the nature-classification of purpose codes as (0) (Table B.2), and captured when the activity is found as having no direct significant contribution towards environmental degradation nor putting pressure on nature (e.g. educational projects, healthcare initiatives, population programmes), or as being unrelated to biodiversity and nature.

In essence, these are the steps taken to implement the methodology (see Figure 3.1):

Preparing the dataset:

- A keyword search is run across project titles and descriptions to capture activities containing nature-related, and/or nature-at-risk actions, according to different key word lists.
- Further, using the nature-classification sector list, purpose codes are assigned as potentially nature-related (+), nature-at-risk (-) or nature-residual (0).

Tracking nature-related contributions:

- Filter ODF commitments using available nature-focused data: biodiversity Rio marker (principal). These are identified as the core of nature-related activities.
- Next, we look for the significant component of the biodiversity Rio marker and the use of the SDGs 14 (life under water) and/or SDG 15 (life on land), which correspond to nature-mainstreaming activities.

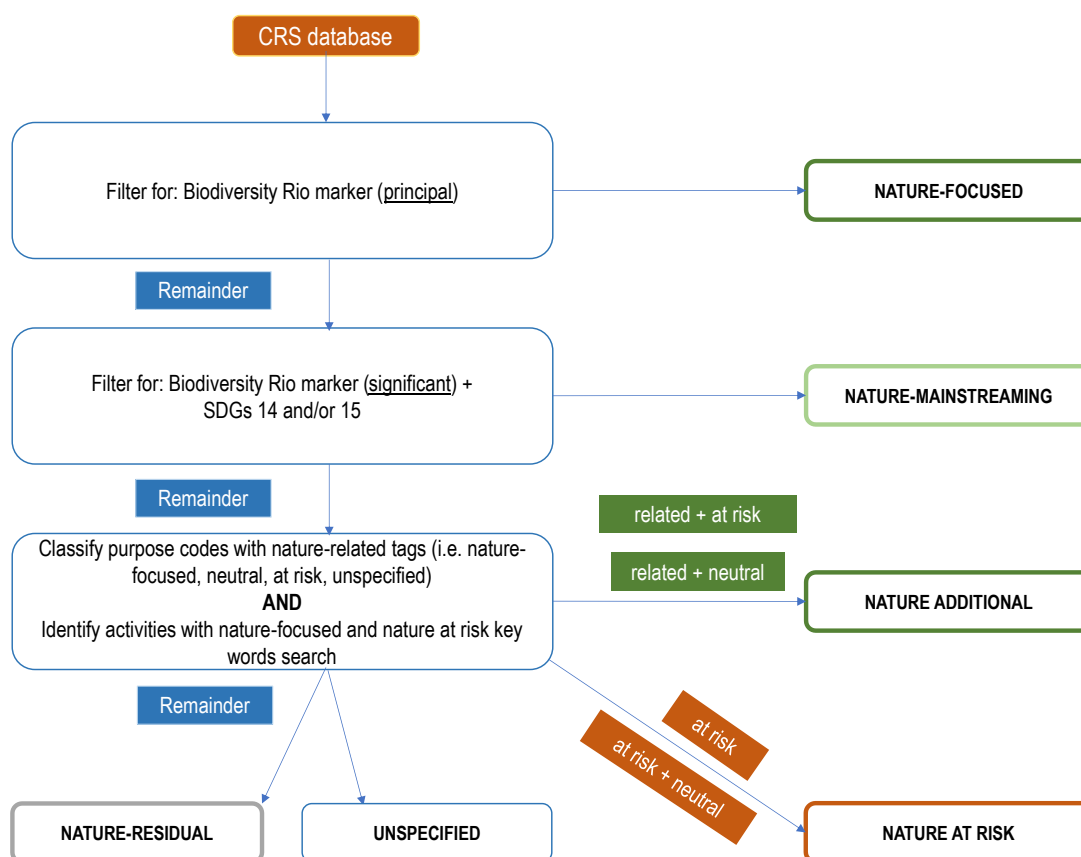
These activities are then filtered out. To the remainder data the following protocol applies:

- In the preparation stages, activities will have been identified as nature-related, nature-at-risk, nature-residual and unspecified, according to a keyword search and their sectoral allocation. Manual verification and special screening over the retained activities in this step ensures the methodology is robust and helps re-classify activities, if needed. The methodology also recognises that activities may face multiple trade-offs and thus capture more than one nature-related element at once. In such cases:
 - i. When nature-related and -residual activities overlap, the activities were classified as nature-additional because the provider aimed to positively contribution to nature, and there is no information reflecting a direct negative effect on nature.
 - ii. When nature-related and nature-at-risk activities overlap, the activity was classified as nature-mainstreaming as the activity integrates elements that can be beneficial towards the environment, yet the activity cannot be considered to represent a net gain.
 - iii. When nature-at-risk and -residual activities overlap, the activity will be considered as placing nature-at-risk.

To the remainder data:

- If information is unrelated, they are classified as nature-residual (0).
- If information is unclear, missing or partial, the activity is excluded from the analysis and tagged as “unspecified”.

Figure 3.1. Steps taken to assess the contribution of ODF to nature objectives



Caveats and assumptions of the methodology

As noted, the DAC CRS has no tag enabling a direct analysis of nature-positive activities and there is no requirement to identify nature-positive activities through this system. This poses several limits to the current methodology:

- The methodology aims to assess the development finance portfolios against nature (i.e. contributions for biodiversity and nature reflected by financial inputs). Actual impacts on nature would be better evaluated and reflected when a project concludes (ex post), within a robust impact-evaluation framework (Trinomics B.V. & Climate Policy Initiative 2022). Understanding the biodiversity impacts of activities requires complex data sources, beyond financial inputs such as those included in the CRS, as well as modelling value chain analysis relative to a given project's locations and the various biodiversity pressures involved (Hilton and Lee, 2021^[115]). Moreover, not only does assessing the nature-related impact during the ex-post evaluation phase (and ongoing life project cycle) represent a challenge for internal evaluation offices and/or external evaluation consultants, but it would also be difficult for them to report the information back to the OECD.
- The methodology captures nature-related activities based on a DAC member commitments – but members have no requirement to explicitly state their contribution to the nature-positive objective in their project descriptions. To do a more robust analysis requires explicit and comprehensive data that states the intended benefits of a given activity to nature in project descriptions.

- The methodology relies on manual verification and case-by-case assessments to ensure accuracy. Aiming for robustness and conservative results, the results can only be seen as an estimation of the reality. Implementing this methodology is resource and time-intensive and making it more granular is difficult and would require sourcing additional data/information externally (e.g. project evaluations, assessment of application of safeguards across providers).
- The methodology relies on a screening process (i.e. through keyword searches, see Table B.1) to capture elements or actions related to nature. There are limitations when using keyword searches on text descriptions of the CRS. Due to missing words, incomplete or erroneous reporting, and lack of accuracy in some project descriptions, the procedure cannot guarantee that nature-related elements are always detected. Moreover, members and project managers may use different vocabulary to describe projects and may also consider trigger words to mean different things, partially due to different levels of awareness on the environment. To ensure greater robustness of the methodology, activities identified through the keyword search were individually verified. Further, project descriptions in the CRS may also be a simplification of more in-depth information provided within provider project documents and a more comprehensive analysis would benefit from looking into individual project design plans and technical notes.
- The methodology mixes explicit intentions (commitments as expressed through the biodiversity Rio marker and the SDGs, or through project descriptions) and a taxonomy-based approach applied to the sector purpose codes of the CRS. A taxonomy is relatively easy to implement, once the list is agreed upon, but the level of granularity of the purpose codes in the CRS limits the development of an exhaustive list for all eligible projects, leaving room for interpretation. Indeed, some purpose codes can cover a wide range of activities (e.g. general environment protection). Also, a taxonomy is less accurate as it categorises activities in general but does not consider each project's specific context. The current classification list proposed (Table B.2) is literature-based but additional fine-tuning and discussion may change categorisations.
- Data submitted to the CRS accounts for the complete value reported to a given activity – and not for the specific contribution of the objective depicted by the specific tag. Indeed, the dataset provides information on financial inputs, with no coefficients applied, in comparison to other approaches (e.g. France).
- Other challenges exist when applying the methodology to the CRS database. For instance, there is lack of consistency on the use of the Rio marker and SDGs, and among SDG tags. This can sometimes make the ultimate objective of an activity blurry. In addition, there are inconsistencies across members regarding the reporting of the biodiversity Rio marker. For example, in some cases, activities identified as not being targeted (0) can be found to be related to biodiversity and nature through keyword searches or the SDGs. Manual verification looks for such missing data but cannot guarantee that all instances were identified.
- The analysis was run over allocable flows only and purpose codes in the database considered to be unallocable or unspecified (see Table B.2) were excluded and classified as “unspecified”. In addition, activities with limited data to establish a direct link with nature were also re-classified into the “unspecified” category (e.g. when no project description was provided), in line with (France, 2022^[116]) and a conservative approach to consider the data provided by members.
- The methodology was only applied to the CRS database and did not consider the TOSSD. Multilateral providers were not assessed in this study. So, results only provide a partial picture of the overall development co-operation landscape.

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