

the UNITED FRONT for NATURE & NET ZERO

NEW YORK - SEPTEMBER 22-24, 2024



The **aim** was to seek better understanding of the major issues dividing us across nature, reductions and removals, that are blocking action by the private sector.



More than **60 leaders** from a very wide range of organisations across the climate and nature communities contributed to the discussions



We reflected on **what change is needed**, focusing on genuine trade-offs (and how to resolve them), and potential new synergies (and how to benefit from them).



Before leaving the room, everyone wrote their answer to **three questions**: what change is needed; what question should this initiative answer, and what is already working that we can build on. The results led us to our four key objectives.



We created a **safe space** for multiple dialogues and deep listening over three days during NY Climate Week



We considered **existing faultlines** such as integrity vs pragmatism, nature vs climate, and reductions vs removals and concluded that these fixed binary positions create wasteful friction and need to be turned into **areas of creative tension**



Rethinking Removals, the Race to Zero campaign under the leadership of the UN Climate Change High Level Champions, with seed funding from the Global Commons Alliance Accountability Accelerator.

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in SUMMARY... WE HEARD WE NEED to...



Accelerate action on climate and nature by



incentivising companies to take a **holistic approach** on reductions, removals and nature restoration



which will **get companies off the fence** and produce concrete action



that global governments can **build on to shorten the glidepath to compliance**

We have some ideas about how to help make these objectives happen, including convenings focused on specific concrete actions in different regions over the course of next year. **We would love to work with you** on this. Are you willing to help us with this next chapter out to COP 30? **The next page says more about how you could be involved.**



OBJECTIVES

We also heard that these four objectives would substantially help us reach this overall outcome:



Narrative: Reframe the narrative to show how different climate and nature solutions fit together so that nature is no longer just an extra on the side of climate action



Incentives: Address misaligned incentives so that companies value taking holistic action on reductions, removals and nature restoration



Ecosystem Organization: Map the ecosystem so established and new players understand their role in this bigger picture and act accordingly, including clarity on who is encouraging and who is policing what

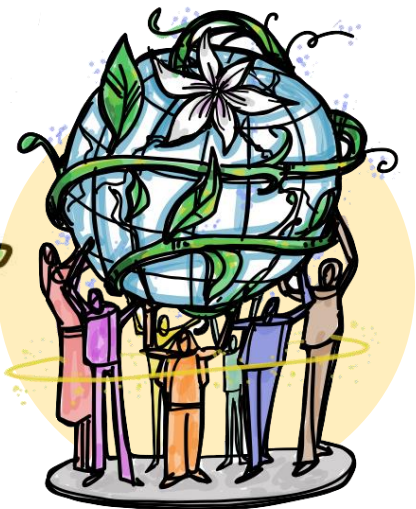


Regulation: Shorten the glide path to policy/regulations

3. WE HEARD *that* WE NEED^{to}

Create **safe spaces** that allow key players in nature, reductions and removals to **turn binary faultlines into areas of creative tension** from which **new holistic solutions** can emerge.

Pay targeted attention to the **unique requirements of specific regions** while also identifying where there is **global common ground**.



REGIONAL WORKSHOPS *and* GLOBAL SUMMATION



We propose to convene workshops over 2025-2026 in:

- *Asia-Pacific*
- *North America*
- *Africa*
- *South America*
- *Europe*
- *Global Summation*



Each workshop will build on the previous ones, while developing concrete solutions relevant to the region. Participants will:

- **Build a unified narrative** across nature and climate
- **Address conflicting incentives for corporates** based on regional case studies
- **Map out the regional ecosystems** - who is (and should be) responsible for what and how the different parts of the system interconnect
- **Clarify the glidepath** from voluntary to compliance markets in each region

CAN YOU HELP US?

We are now **seeking partners** who can help us:



Get the right people in the room

We already have the support of many influential players across reductions, removals and nature and are currently reaching out more widely particularly in the Global South. Do you know people who should be involved?



Shape the dialogues

We need partners who can work with us to identify the right questions and issues to tackle and co-design the workshops.



Support with resources

The first phase was generously seed-funded by the Accountability Accelerator. Can you support us with resources in this new phase?



APPENDIX

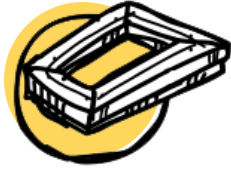


PARTICIPANTS in the UNITED FRONT. NY

Natasha Matic *Accountability Accelerator*
 Kumi Naidoo *Africans Rising for Justice, Peace and Dignity*
 Kerry Constabile *Amazon*
 Nigel Topping *Ambition Loop*
 Gonzalo Munoz *Ambition Loop*
 Esben Brandi *BTG Pactual Timberland*
 Eva Zabey *Business for Nature*
 James Mwangi *CAP-A*
 James Townsend *Carbon Gap*
 Christoph Beuttler *Carbon Gap*
 Pierre Cannet *Client Earth*
 Razan Al-Mubarak *Climate Champions, IUCN*
 Tessa Vincent *Climate Champions*
 Rebecca Kershaw *Climate Champions*
 Louisa Durkin *Climate Champions*
 Carolina Zambrano *CLUA*
 Will Turner *Conservation International*
 Matt Isaacs *Counteract*
 Joanna Macrae *Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy*
 Laurence Tubiana *ECF*
 Morgan Despres *ECF*
 Elizabeth Sturcken *EDF*
 Johan Falk *ERI*
 Claire Wigg *ERI*
 Nathan Truitt *Forest Foundation*
 Zoe Tcholak-Antitch *Global Commons Alliance*
 Dharsono Hartono *Kadin Net Zero Hub and PT Rimba Makmur Utama*
 Steven Marcelino *Kadin Net Zero Hub and Equatorise UK*
 Robert Hogland *Marginal Carbon*
 Marco Lambertini *Nature Positive Initiative*
 Gavin Edwards *Nature Positive Initiative*

Georgina Beaseley *Net Zero Lawyers Alliance*
 Thomas Day *New Climate Institute*
 Silke Mooldijk *New Climate Institute*
 Tom Hale *Oxford - RfZ EPRG Co-chair*
 Kaya Axelsson *Oxford Net Zero*
 Injy Johnstone *Oxford Net Zero*
 Matilda Becker *Oxford Net Zero*
 Johan Rockström *Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research*
 Antti Vihavainen *Puro*
 Jon Cryets *Rocky Mountain Institute*
 Tracy Wyman *SBTi Chief Impact Officer*
 Erin Billman *SBTN*
 Galina Angarova *SIRGE Coalition*
 Jonathan Lipman *Speed and Scale*
 Jeffrey Brown *Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability*
 Joanna Klitzke *Stripe*
 Jane Flegal *Stripe*
 Amanda Starbuck *Sunrise Project*
 Allister Furrey *Sylvera*
 Lindsay Levin *TED*
 Peter Ellis *The Nature Conservancy*
 Lila Karbassi *UN Global Compact*
 Ana Carolina Szklo *VCMI*
 Rachel Kyte *VCMI and others*
 Dominic Waughray *WBCSD, GHG Protocol*
 María Mendiluce *WMB*
 Manuel Pulgar-Vidal *WWF*
 Martha Stevenson *WWF-US*
 Nikki Batchelor *XPRIZE*
 Peter Boyd *Yale - RfZ EPRG Co-chair*





The Big Picture

- The aim is not to create a more profitable market but to unlock the power of the profit-driven private sector to sustain human life on the planet,
- Stopping climate change is part of restoring nature - we all need to value nature, not just price it.
- If we don't build trust between us, we all lose.
- The global south needs to be at the forefront of the solutions - "we are not buying what you're trying to sell us"
- NGOs are weighed down with excessive responsibility, without helpful governance.



Design Principles

- Safety is the precondition to open up.
- Focus on principles more than details
- To overcome defensiveness, address fears and trade-offs head on
- Focus on the least number of most important things
- We need new voices and new leaders
- Prioritise participation from high ambition countries in the global south



We Need To

- Develop a holistic approach connecting nature, reductions, removals.
- Align incentives to clarify the value proposition for companies.
- Map out a clear view of where everyone fits in the bigger picture.
- Shorten the glide path from voluntary action to compliance.
- Shift from binary positions (faultlines) to middle ground areas of creative tension
- Shift the blame to those who aren't acting.
- Clarify confusion over language - strive to understand each other and build in strategic communications from the beginning.
- Create prototypes of solutions to address specific challenges.



At the end of every discussion, participants were asked to respond to **three questions**:



WHAT QUESTION WOULD YOU LIKE this INITIATIVE to ANSWER?



WHAT is the CHANGE YOU WOULD LIKE to SEE that WOULD INCREASE CORPORATE AMBITION on CLIMATE and NATURE?



WHAT CHANGE is ALREADY UNDERWAY and SHOWS PROMISE?





WHAT QUESTION WOULD YOU LIKE this INITIATIVE to ANSWER?

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Narrative

- What are the simple narratives I and we all can amplify that are in the 'landing zone'?
- The recognition that we are all losing together for the moment. And that we have to recreate the moment upwards. Everybody is flying too easy. Get out of the comfort zone.
- That we do need a 'maximalist' approach (everything, everywhere) to get us to 2030 at least: pragmatic removals at \$300/ton, natural climate solutions, technology & finance for decarbonization.
- How to be pragmatic and solve the north vs south issues.
- Can we build a united front to value nature?
- Can we make the ultimate Venn-diagram and find the common ground we emphasize everywhere.

Incentives

- How to create incentives and recognition for companies financing removals without compromising transparency on emissions reductions.
- How we make it an expectation that companies fund climate.
- What claim is exciting to companies to help them demonstrate/talk about their global efforts alongside their organisational targets?
- How to ensure the credibility of solutions so that benefits are prioritized over criticism that undermines solutions.
- How can we address green-hushing?
- How to tackle the problems some corporates (acting in good faith) are facing in implementing their commitments.
- How to accelerate companies' investments in nature and carbon removals from now?



WHAT QUESTION WOULD YOU LIKE *this* INITIATIVE *to* ANSWER?

Glidepath

- How to really address deep decarbonization sector by sector and translate that into a strong framework of climate laws.
- We need a shift from individual liability to collective responsibility.
- How do we make the VCM the best bridge possible to government-driven action at scale?
- How do we catalyze global action rather than an inefficiency collection of national efforts?
- How can we pressure/help financial regulators to take regulatory action?

Ecosystem Organization

- What is our unified theory of change? Who is doing what? Where are the gaps and how will we fill them?
- Bring all players from NGOs and business and policy and standards to have a safe dialogue so we can see how we are all in the same boat but with different roles and tactics.
- What are the rules of engagement for all the players that enable momentum and trust?
- What are the ground rules of the sandbox that will convene the people to build the corporate net zero rule-set for the future?
- What behaviours can we all adopt to help us focus on solving common goals when differences and barriers appear to divide us?
- How to establish coalitions of change between business-science-policy (& civil society) to accelerate the pace of change and even create self-interest.
- How we can create across climate and nature movements a culture/cadre of systems-thinking deep listeners so we break down silos and back more curious bridge-builders.
- Can we really make structural progress within a broken status quo or should we fundamentally challenge that status quo?





WHAT is the CHANGE YOU WOULD LIKE to SEE that WOULD INCREASE CORPORATE AMBITION on CLIMATE and NATURE?

Narrative

- Mindset shift that not acting is not an option.
- More celebration of those doing well. More compelling, simple narratives for change.
- Practical ways to begin net zero nature positive transitions.
- A decoupling of the concepts of 'corporate emissions reduction' and 'development finance goals'. We need both, but these are not the same thing.
- A dual metric system that acknowledges, separately but equally, companies' organizational net zero progress and their contributions to the global net zero goal.
- Close the accountability gap between companies, government, people and nature. Provide people with the tools to want to have corporate accountability and facilitate this through stronger human-nature relationship building and education.

Incentives

- Realignment of incentives across standards that provides space for experimentation, risk cover, and learning that continues to move things forwards and rewards immediate action.
- Demonstrable evidence that companies that take action, eg funding towards climate and nature, trade at a share price premium vs those that don't.
- Rewards (and eventually requirements) for deep decarbonisation and investment in removals and nature in the places where most can be done the fastest by companies.
- Better rewards for positive change; structure for natural carbon removals which protects corporate action.
- Near-term market signal that mandates or incentivises CDR.
- An expectation that all companies should fund climate projects - somehow, somewhere, but now. Debate the details later.
- Strategies on penalties to complement strategies on incentives.





WHAT is the CHANGE YOU WOULD LIKE to SEE that WOULD INCREASE CORPORATE AMBITION on CLIMATE and NATURE?

Glidepath

- Greater clarity on the road to compliance markets and mandates.
- Transition pathways agreed for all industries and then regulated.
- Policy incentives to reward positive action, penalize negative action.
- More voluntary standards moved into regulation to give the alignment needed.
- Use corporate action and innovation and business case to pave the way for regulation. Raise the ceiling, then raise the floor.
- A new space for structured public-private interaction to help scale things that work.
- Repurpose environmentally harmful subsidies.
- Get government to support voluntary carbon market.

Ecosystem Organisation

- Open, genuine and inclusive design processes to learn from various stakeholders and improve their design without abandoning their principles (which are great).
- Radical candor and transparency on all sides about the real, legitimate challenges companies face and a shift away from individual liability and towards collective responsibility to transform sectors and economies (justly).
- A clear and connected (not competitive) network of initiatives that agree on 'why', the outcome we are driving towards, and that we take different pieces of the 'now'.
- Mechanisms designed to build trust and alignment across the ecosystem.
- Make this a multidimensional, multifaceted problem and move away from binary narratives (good vs bad, market vs non, conservative vs progressive etc).
- Create more space for innovation - a safe area so companies can test new market mechanics to achieve targets.





WHAT CHANGE *is* ALREADY UNDERWAY *and* SHOWS PROMISE?

Narrative

- Decreasing confidence in approaches of the last 30 years to make a breakthrough; an increasing spirit to be “entrepreneurial in the global public interest”.
- Innovators in the global south embracing nature and removals as “growth sectors”.
- Recognition that the status quo is not working so people are hungry for a way forward. Promising potential for leadership.
- Greater investment in strategic communications efforts including more funding in this critical space (and we need way more!).
- Desire to shift narrative to be positive and position business on climate and nature.
- Nature (and nature positive) is rising up the global agenda.

Incentives

- Some companies are already taking action, making progress and generating learnings that we can build on, amplify and use as examples for others - how can that be packaged and supercharged?
- Many companies are deeply decarbonising and driving resources to removals and nature and communities and the global south. The trade-offs between these have been navigated and solved in some cases - how can we design systems that navigate and solve these in tens of thousands of cases?
- There are champions in each sector. Make them explain why they are moving and what assumptions they are making in the actual and future economic context.
- Frameworks, targets, tools etc are available to start taking concrete action.
- Improvements in brainstorming, testing and refining methods for measuring the impacts of interventions in the value chain, enabling a more efficient distribution of resources.





WHAT CHANGE *is* ALREADY UNDERWAY *and* SHOWS PROMISE?

Glidepath

- Voluntary action is translating into regulation - and the rate and scale of this is exciting and brings hope.
- Advanced discussion of removal integration into ETS and how to do so in a way that does not block ambition on emissions reduction or nature.
- Introduction of mandate for companies to report (at least on emissions but not on action beyond that).
- Transition Plan is on its way to be a regulatory requirement.
- Mandatory reporting is the first step to mandatory action.
- The beginning of serious resilience plans which reveals how much we have to do.

Ecosystem organisation

- A movement beyond ambition to performance and a widening lens beyond carbon.
- There is growing common support across previously divergent 'sides' of the debate on an outcomes-first approach - thinking what we need and working back.
- Recognition that climate science alone doesn't/can't tell us what governments, corporations, individuals need to do.
- Standard setters/voluntary initiatives being more nuanced and specific in terms of types of commitments (what things mean and what they don't).
- Consolidation within the standards space to reduce complexity.
- Clear guidance on integrity from the demand and supply sides of the VCM.
- There's a cohort of dedicated youth around the world committed to holding corporate feet to the fire.

