



Natuurlijk  
Kapitaal

# Manifesto

A nature-positive  
Netherlands as bright  
perspective

# A nature-positive Netherlands as bright perspective

Dear Minister Van der Wal,

Biodiversity and ecosystem degradation is one of the greatest threats to human kind. After all, nature, biodiversity and associated ecosystem services are the foundation of our existence. Currently, more than half of the world's total GDP is subject to moderate or severe risk due to loss of nature. And the Dutch financial sector alone is at risk of more than €500 billion.

The rapid degradation of nature and biodiversity is therefore a major risk for our economy and society. Every business ultimately depends - directly or indirectly - on our nature and natural resources.

In light of the national challenges and the upcoming international UN summit on biodiversity, we, as committed CEOs, are making the case for strengthening and preserving nature.

## **Creating a bright perspective**

Power of innovation and decisiveness of our society is necessary to turn loss of nature and biodiversity into a nature-positive future: by 2030 at the latest, loss of nature should be reversed into gain of nature. This means: More animals, plants and/ or microbes, improving the health of a natural ecosystem, in a specific location and timeframe, as a result of a human intervention. It is important to look beyond our own operational activities: the entire value chain should also be included. However, this requires fundamental changes in the design of our country, our economy and our society, to make sure future generations also have a chance. An integral long-term vision from the government is essential to unlock the Power of innovation and decisiveness of the business community and to ensure that a level playing field is created, for instance through the implementation of "true prices" that benefit society. From the business community, we see numerous opportunities to realise a nature-positive economy. We invite the government to develop an integrated long-term vision together with the business community.

When we start thinking of the economy as a natural ecosystem in itself, certain sectors can in fact offer solutions to other sectors that are currently facing structural issues. With this holistic way of thinking, we can initiate a cross-sectoral transition, with a nature-positive Netherlands as bright perspective:

1. Agriculture faces a significant soil, water, nitrogen, biodiversity and emissions problem, but at the same time has the potential to transform into a regenerative, nature-inclusive and climate-positive system. Financially valuing and rewarding ecosystem services could offer a solution here.
2. In transition, agriculture can become an important supplier of bio-based raw materials for the construction and chemical sector.
3. The construction sector could switch to biobased materials, storing CO<sub>2</sub> instead of emitting it in traditional construction. For example, building with straw, which in turn comes from agriculture.
4. In the built environment, attention should be paid to nature-inclusive building. This has a positive effect on our physical and mental health, reducing healthcare costs.
5. The healthcare sector, being a key buyer, will start buying food from regenerative farmers, who in turn will be able to make the switch to sustainable production based on long-term demand. The healthcare sector will also work with the water sector to address the current issues of drug residues in water.
6. The water sector can prevent water scarcity and create circular water systems through proper coordination with extensive agriculture and built environment.
7. Industry will make the shift to circular production processes that reduces pressure on ecosystems by reducing polluting emissions and the use of primary raw materials.
8. The financial sector helps to enable the above-mentioned transitions to nature-positive for companies and sectors, encourages them and thus lowers long-term risks regarding biodiversity and nature.

The above-mentioned examples are already possible today. And with them many more. In close cooperation between government, business and civil society organisations, we can shape and realise the bright perspective of a nature-positive Netherlands.

Based on an integrated long-term vision, supported by coherent and consistent government policy, the business community can initiate nature-positive transitions and contribute to the necessary “resource mobilisation”.

Therefore, as committed CEOs, we call on the government to create a clear long-term vision for a nature-positive Netherlands, together with the business community.

### **What do we expect from the Dutch government?**

To halt biodiversity loss, restore nature and initiate fundamental transitions, business and government desperately need each other. Therefore, we call upon the Dutch government to:

1. Formulate a long-term vision including concrete steps to realise the vision in time (we are happy to help!).
2. Ensure a coherent and consistent government policy that actually supports this vision for the long term. This will provide businesses with clarity, a level playing field and stability, which are necessary for extensive transitions of business models and processes.
3. Pursue and negotiate ambitious targets, nationally and internationally at COP15 (at least 30% nature restoration as described in target 2 of the Global Biodiversity Framework).
4. Make it mandatory for (large) companies to disclose and report their impact and dependencies on nature and biodiversity through annual reports.
5. Make a government-wide inventory of harmful subsidies and phase them out or convert them into nature-positive subsidies.
6. Provide clear information to ensure that citizens and companies embrace the importance of biodiversity and nature.
7. Organise capacity development for the business community to take relevant actions.
8. Consider exploring a ban on ecocide so that predation on biodiversity can be banned.

### **What are we doing as business community?**

As business community, we also take our responsibility. This will be our contribution:

1. We map out our impact and dependencies on nature and biodiversity. We integrate this in our decision-making and report on it publicly.
2. We integrate biodiversity conservation and restoration into our companies' decision-making to maximise positive impact and minimise negative impact in order to demonstrably stay within planetary boundaries before 2050.
3. We are keen to think and work with the government to jointly achieve a long-term vision and practical solutions.
4. We share the obstacles we encounter in our transition to a nature-positive economy, so that the government can support this.
5. We provide incubators and prototypes of the 'new normal' in which not only financial but also human, social and natural capital is steered upon.
6. We actively communicate the initiatives we are already taking so that others also become more aware of the importance of nature and biodiversity for our economy.
7. We as CEOs encourage other leaders of companies and organisations to make a positive contribution to nature restoration themselves.

Biodiversity is connected to everything that sustains us and is of immense importance to our economy, our society and future generations. Transformative change at various levels is needed. This requires leadership and steering towards a long-term vision. With coherent and consistent government policies, the business community can initiate nature-positive transitions.

We, representatives of the companies listed below, see the need but certainly also the opportunities. It is time to transition to nature-positive. We are ready to shape this together with the Dutch government.

Arie Koornneef – CEO ASN Bank

Jos Baeten – CEO a.s.r.

Onno Dwars – CEO Ballast Nedam Development

Geert van der Veer – Chair Herenboeren

Lidewij de Haas – CEO Arcadis Nederland

Drees van den Bosch – CEO Hutten

Lidwin van Velden – CEO Nederlandse Waterschapsbank

Volkert Engelsman – CEO Eosta

Marika Bonhof – CFO/COO Vitens

René Koppert – CEO Koppert Nederland

Maria van der Heijden - Managing director MVO Nederland

asn bank

g.s.r.  
de nederlandse  
verzekerings  
maatschappij  
voor alle  
verzekeringen

Ballast Nedam  
Development



ARCADIS

K  
Koppert

eosta  
where ecology meets economy

Hutten  
Altijd meer aandacht

NWB) BANK

Vitens

MVO  
NEDERLAND

\*WWF, Living Planet Report, 2022

\*\* Verenigde Naties, 2019

\*\*\* Partnership for Biodiversity Accounting Financials (PBAF), 2022