



Recommendations

for advancing natural
infrastructure incentives

Recommendations for advancing **natural infrastructure**

In 2015, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) launched the Natural Infrastructure for Business (NI4Biz) platform, outlining the business case for investing in Natural Infrastructure (NI).

To increase implementation of NI and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we assessed incentives and barriers for implementing NI projects in six regions around the world.

This study investigates how business and the wider community can further advance implementation of NI.

Our recommendations focus on:

- 1 Collaborating with local authorities about permitting for NI
- 2 Engaging with the finance community to increase financing of NI
- 3 Promoting policies and risk reduction benefits of NI

A photograph of a pond with lily pads and reeds. The water is blue, and the lily pads are green. The reeds are tall and green. The sky is blue.

1

Collaborating with local authorities about permitting for NI

Recommendations for the business community:

- **Raise awareness with local permitting agencies about NI as a viable solution:** Work with permitting agencies to introduce NI solutions, raise awareness about NI's effectiveness and simplify the permitting process.
- **Co-develop technical and regulatory guidance on NI implementation with local authorities:** Draw from business experience in implementing NI to co-develop guidance on designing, building, managing and monitoring NI projects.

- **Promote and request streamlined permitting processes with local governments:** Engage with local agencies and NGOs to reduce multiple steps and complex challenges associated with obtaining NI permits.
- **Leverage existing policy frameworks to facilitate NI implementation:** Demonstrate that NI's performance, cost-effectiveness and co-benefits help achieve governmental goals outlined in policy directives or frameworks.

Recommendations for business, government and NGOs:

- **Share experiences regarding permitting challenges for NI within different countries:** Utilize networks such as WBCSD's NI4Biz platform to exchange lessons learned in different locations.



2

Engaging with the finance community to increase NI financing

Recommendations for governments and business, including the finance sector:

- **Test and evaluate the benefits and effectiveness of new models/partnerships for financing NI:** Coordinate financing and piloting of new models to sustainably fund NI. This can help lay the foundation for developing new finance/insurance products that support NI (i.e. Debt for Adaptation Models, Storm Water Retention Trading Credits and Payments for Ecosystem Services). The benefits include risk reduction and cost-savings for business and governments.

Recommendations for governments, multi-lateral agencies, donors and NGOs working with business:

- **Convene key NI stakeholders to identify and address knowledge gaps:** Bring different groups together from research, business and finance to collaborate in fulfilling information needs.
- **Engage a range of investors to overcome challenges to scale up:** Foster collaboration between NI proponents and investors to identify ways to overcome NI financing challenges through public-private partnerships, concessionary funding, bundling/aggregating

multiple projects, and/or creating regional level projects that benefit multiple stakeholders.

- **Connect sustainable finance networks to advance NI financing:** Coordinate work across networks such as the Conservation Finance Alliance, Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BioFin) and Natural Capital Finance Alliance (formerly the Natural Capital Declaration) to overcome challenges of scaling NI projects. Doing so will help attract mainstream investors and secure additional revenue streams for NI.



3 Promoting policies and risk reduction benefits of NI

Recommendations for business and national business/industry organizations:

- **Promote policy frameworks that encourage consideration of NI:** Support national and sub-national policy frameworks that drive implementation of NI (e.g. Maryland Living Shoreline Protection Act in the United States, the National Coastal Greenbelt Action Plan in the Philippines).
- **Quantify the business benefits of NI for climate change adaptation and risk reduction:** Use tools such as ecosystem service valuation and return on investment analyses to quantify the cost-effectiveness and risk profiles of NI related to implementation, performance and maintenance.

This will boost investor confidence in NI solutions and increase financing options.

- **Convey local business support for NI solutions related to risk reduction for local governments and international agencies:** Communicate with local governments or international organizations to raise awareness about the performance of and business case for NI. Focus on organizations (e.g. World Bank) who can influence financing and permitting in specific countries.

Recommendations to NGOs and business:

- **Demonstrate how NI helps governments achieve policy, development and risk reduction goals:** Communicate examples of how NI supports national policy directives and commitments to sustainable development, including commitments to the SDGs.

NI permitting and financing are critical to advance implementation of NI solutions. Business has a key role to play in demonstrating the effectiveness of NI solutions and engaging with those stakeholders who can influence financing and permitting.

Disclaimer

This publication is released in the name of WBCSD. It does not, however, necessarily mean that every member company agrees with every word.

This publication has been prepared for general guidance on matters of interest only, and does not constitute professional advice. You should not act upon the information contained in this publication without obtaining specific professional advice.

No representation or warranty (express or implied) is given as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this publication, and, to the extent permitted by law, WBCSD, its members, employees and agents do not accept or assume any liability, responsibility or duty of care for any consequences of you or anyone else acting, or refraining to act, in reliance on the information contained in this publication or for any decision based on it.





About the **World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)**

WBCSD is a global, CEO-led organization of over 200 leading businesses working together to accelerate the transition to a sustainable world. We help make our member companies more successful and sustainable by focusing on the maximum positive impact for shareholders, the environment and societies.

Our member companies come from all business sectors and all major economies, representing a combined revenue of more than \$8.5 trillion and 19 million employees. Our Global Network of almost 70 national business councils gives our members unparalleled reach across the globe.

WBCSD is uniquely positioned to work with member companies along and across value chains to deliver impactful business solutions to the most challenging sustainability issues.

Together, we are the leading voice of business for sustainability: united by our vision of a world where more than 9 billion people are all living well and within the boundaries of our planet, by 2050.

**World Business Council
for Sustainable Development**

Maison de la Paix
Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2B
CP 2075, 1211 Geneva 1
Switzerland