

PRESS RELEASE

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Nature Positive Toolkit to help recycling and waste managers support biodiversity

The Environmental Services Association (ESA) has today (Wednesday 27th September 2023) published a new ***Nature Positive Toolkit***, which provides a comprehensive resource to help organisations across the recycling and waste management sector understand and mitigate their impacts on nature and, subsequently, on biodiversity.

Nature is being degraded faster than at any other time in human history. Over one million species are currently threatened by extinction and their ecosystems are at risk of collapse. This loss of nature cannot be sustained.

The global focus on reducing carbon emissions has a significant role to play in the protection of ecosystems but the need for wider actions, to halt and restore nature loss by 2030, and to ensure we live in harmony with nature by 2050, has come rapidly to the fore in recent years – with governments and all sectors having an important role to play to understand and mitigate their specific impacts and dependencies on nature.

In light of this responsibility, the ESA established a Biodiversity Working Group in 2021 which published a ***Biodiversity Best Practice Guide*** for the recycling and waste management sector to coincide with the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in December 2022. This was supported by a **short film**.

Going further, today's new ***Nature Positive Toolkit*** comprises two documents entitled ***Supporting a Nature Positive Future: a process for ESA Members*** and ***Nature Positive Process: Technical Note***, as well as an interactive powerpoint-based tool entitled ***Mapping impacts on nature***.

Used together, these tools provide a standardised process for recycling and waste management operators to follow to support a Nature Positive future. **The toolkit was commissioned by the ESA and produced jointly by independent expert consultants, Mott Macdonald and WSP.**

The toolkit sets out a definition of "Nature Positive" for the sector and outlines the business case for organisations to take this approach. In alignment with international frameworks and methodologies including the Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) and the Science-based Targets for Nature (SBTN). It also describes how organisations across the sector can establish a baseline for measuring their own impacts on nature using the tool as a starting point.

Once a quantified baseline of impacts is established, the toolkit presents a process for organisations to take to support a Nature Positive future as well as useful external reference sources to help ratchet up nature positive actions.

Chair of the ESA's Biodiversity Working Group, Leigh Broadhurst, said: *"At current global annual consumption rates, it would take 1.7 planet Earth's to meet humanity's needs. Clearly this significant over-extraction of natural resources is unsustainable and is devastating the ecosystems upon which every living*

organism on earth relies. Conserving precious resources is at the heart of what the recycling and waste management sector does, but our operations have their own impacts on nature. By understanding these impacts, we can not only mitigate the negative aspects, but take positive action to actively contribute towards conservation efforts.

In our adopted definition, organisations across our sector supporting ‘Nature Positive’ will have an overall measurable net positive impact on nature that contributes towards local and national conservation targets. This relates to impacts within the organisation’s control, for example from operations, offices and sites.

Additionally, for impacts on nature that are outside of its control, the organisation proactively encourages and promotes a Nature Positive approach to those who can control those impacts.

The ESA is urging its members, and others across the sector, to adopt a Nature Positive approach to managing and mitigating their impacts, and the toolkit published today will help achieve this.”

Julia Baker, Nature Services Lead at Mott MacDonald, said: *“All parts of our economies and societies are impacted by the increasingly vital role of nature and biodiversity. Mott MacDonald was excited by the opportunity to collaborate with ESA and WSP and bring our industry-leading knowledge and experience to deliver such a critical resource for the waste and recycling sector and the communities they serve.*

Nature services is integral to our Mott MacDonald values and we’re proud to have contributed to such an important new project.”

Tom Butterworth, Head of Ecology at WSP, said: *“Nature is critical to every business and especially those working in the waste sector, not only because we need to minimise impacts on nature but because there are significant opportunities to enhance and restore nature.*

The Nature Positive process set out by the ESA is a robust and rounded approach that will help businesses working in any part of the waste value chain build nature into their business – minimising risks and maximising opportunities, for the business, for people and for nature.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- A. The **Environmental Services Association** (ESA) is the trade association representing the UK’s resource and waste management industry. Our members are directly transforming the way the UK’s waste is managed in pursuit of a circular economy and are leading the sector in an effort to decarbonise recycling and waste management operations. The ESA works with all levels of government, regulators and the public in pursuit of a more circular economy across the UK. You can find out more about us and our members in our **Annual report** for 2022.
- B. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) identified the five direct drivers of biodiversity loss as changing use of sea and land, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasive non-native species. Furthermore, the two indirect drivers are people’s disconnect with nature and the resulting lack of value placed on the importance of nature.
- C. Visit these websites for more information about the **Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures** and **Science-based Targets for Nature**

D. Leigh Broadhurst announced details of the ESA's Nature Positive Toolkit at the Resources and Waste Management Expo (RWM) on Thursday 14th September 2023 in a session called Nature Positive Actions in the Waste and Resources Sector at 14.15 on the Keynote Theatre stage. A short video interview of Leigh discussing the Nature Positive Toolkit at RWM is available **here**

For further details please visit www.esauk.org

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