

# FINAL - Nature, Land Use and Deforestation

*This document lays out the draft suggestions from the working group focused on Nature, Land Use and Deforestation*

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### Starting line criteria & Leadership principles

Area	Current wording	Potential suggested changes for starting criteria	Potential suggestions for leadership
<b>Pledge</b>	<p>Pledge at the head-of-organisation level to reach (net) zero GHGs as soon as possible, and by midcentury at the latest, in line with global efforts to limit warming to 1.5C. Set an interim target to achieve in the next decade, which reflects maximum effort toward or beyond a fair share of the 50% global reduction in CO2 by 2030 identified in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5C.</p>	<p>Set and disclose short-term (5-10 years) and long-term (e.g., mid-century) science-based climate targets aligned with 1.5°C mitigation pathways and with the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – namely the IPCC Shared Socio-economic Pathways 1 or 2 (SSP1 or SSP2) with no or limited overshoot.</p> <p>Set and disclose targets to remove or “neutralise” any residual emissions ahead of mid-century in alignment with 1.5°C mitigation pathways SSP1 or SSP2 with low or no overshoot.</p> <p>Include land sector emissions in target-setting processes, and include Scope 3 emissions where more than 40% of total emissions are found in the value chain, following the SBTi FLAG guidance or equivalent.</p> <p>Set commitments to achieve and maintain operations and supply chains free of deforestation and of natural ecosystem conversion by 2025. Companies that have set but failed to reach 2020 zero-deforestation targets must revise their target date to no later than 2025.</p> <p>Set commitments to avoid or reduce with a view to phasing out activities that lead to ecosystem degradation, including wetlands’ drainage and degradation of soil and water resources.</p>	<p><i>Pledge to protect forests, wetlands, and other natural ecosystems in company value chains and surrounding/ impacted areas, supporting reforestation and restoration of natural ecosystems, and participating in landscape/jurisdictional approaches.</i></p> <p><i>Pledge to support conservation action.</i></p> <p><i>Set a target that goes beyond abatement to also mitigate emissions outside the value chain of the company, for example through direct conservation finance or through high integrity carbon credit purchases.</i></p>
<b>Plan</b>	<p>Within 12 months of joining, explain what actions will be taken toward achieving both interim and longer-term pledges, especially in the short- to medium-term.</p>	<p><i>Develop and disclose climate transition plans and mitigation strategies, following the mitigation hierarchy, including a set of actions, for achieving these targets, prioritising deep emission reductions within the company’s value chain.</i></p> <p><i>Mitigation strategies should adhere to robust social and environmental principles</i></p> <p><i>Provide details of nature-related risk assessment procedures as they are needed to assess the thoroughness of an entity’s understanding of its nature-related risk exposure.</i></p>	<p>Formal endorsement of corporate climate transition plan by board and/or shareholders</p>

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<b>Proceed</b>	Take immediate action toward achieving (net) zero, consistent with delivering interim targets specified.	<p><i>by addressing land management and land use change emissions across the value chain. Support and participate in reforestation and / or natural ecosystems restoration.</i></p> <p><i>Engage suppliers to reduce land management emissions and increase carbon removals within value chains</i></p>	<p><i>Engage in beyond value chain mitigation (including climate finance and/procurement of high integrity carbon credits) in light of unabated value chain emissions during the transition to net zero and by neutralising residual emissions at the net zero target date.</i></p>
<b>Publish</b>	Commit to report publicly both progress against interim and long-term targets, as well as the actions being taken, at least annually. To the extent possible, report via platforms that feed into the UNFCCC Global Climate Action Portal.	<p><i>Disclose GHG emissions and removals on an annual basis across scopes 1, 2 and 3, including CO2 and non-CO2 emissions and removals from agriculture, forestry and other land use (including land management and land use change) following best practice guidance for accounting (e.g. the GHG Protocol).</i></p> <p><i>Annually disclose performance against targets and demonstrate progress towards achievement over time.</i></p> <p><i>Report progress toward commitments to achieve and maintain operations and supply chains free of deforestation and of natural ecosystem conversion by 2025 and the extent to which they have avoided or reduced with a view to phasing out activities that lead to ecosystem degradation, including wetlands' drainage and degradation of soil and water resources.</i></p> <p><i>Disclose results of nature-related risk assessment.</i></p>	<p><i>Where possible in annual financial reports and accounts, publicly disclose key details relating to , among others, coverage and content of nature-related risk assessment; nature-related risks and opportunities with potential to have substantive financial or strategic impact on business; expectations and obligations for investment in activities and practices that decrease emissions, protect carbon stocks in ecosystems, or enhance removals in ecosystems.</i></p> <p><i>Companies should also annually disclose on progress towards achieving zero deforestation value chains, aligned with, for instance, the Consumer Goods Forum Forest Positive Coalition's Public Information Requirements.</i></p>
<b>Persuade</b>		<p><i>Entities should have a public commitment (e.g., CEO-level commitment) to ensure lobbying efforts are aligned with their climate and nature-related commitments.</i></p>	<p><i>Entities should ensure that industry associations and business coalitions and lobbying groups that they are members of are consistent with their company-specific commitments.</i></p> <p><i>Entities should call for progressive climate policy to drive and encourage local, national and international policies that both support and strengthen investments in natural climate solutions among other climate mitigation solutions.</i></p>

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### Suggested Lexicon Updates

- **Like for like**
  - Remove in all definitions where it currently appears
  - Retain IPCC definitions in all instances possible
- **“Permanent” removals**
  - Delete references to **“Permanent” removals** in the lexicon and in criteria interpretation (where it currently appears). Removals need to fulfil certain conditions not only limited to permanence. These conditions include, next to non-permanence: additionality, leakage risks, stakeholders’ engagement, and socio-environmental safeguards, among others. Perhaps a better reference could be: high-quality removals. The risk of non-permanence does not mean that reversal will materialize, and there are ways to mitigate the risk, for instance, by the different voluntary standards
- **Greenhouse gas emissions in scopes (source: GHG Protocol)**
  - Scope 1: direct emissions from sources that are owned or controlled in full or in part by the organization.
  - Scope 2: indirect emissions from third-party sources from which the organization has purchased or acquired electricity, steam, or heating for its operations; and
  - Scope 3: all other indirect emissions resulting from activities of the organization but occurring from greenhouse gas sources owned or controlled by third parties, such as other organizations or consumers, including emissions from the use of third-party purchased crude oil and gas
- **Value chain**
  - **Beyond-value chain mitigation**
    - Mitigation action or investments that fall outside of a company's value chain. This includes activities that avoid or reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and those that remove and store greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. (source: [SBTi](#))
    - Examples of BVCM include, but are not limited to:
      - Forestry, e.g., Jurisdictional REDD+ • Conservation or restoration projects, e.g., peatland or mangrove
      - Energy efficiency, e.g., cookstove projects
      - Methane destruction, e.g., landfill gas projects
      - Renewable energy, e.g., solar/wind/biogas
      - Industrial gases, e.g., N<sub>2</sub>O destruction at nitric acid facilities
      - Scale-up of CDR technologies, e.g., Direct Air Capture (DAC) and Storage
- **Carbon credits**
  - **High-quality**
  - **High integrity carbon credit purchases**
  - **Socio-environmental integrity:** Supply of high-quality credits along with the responsible corporate climate action that determines the demand for and use of these credits

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- **(Natural) Ecosystem**
  - **Natural Ecosystem Conversion** - Change of a natural ecosystem to another land use, such as agriculture, tree plantations, or intensive livestock production, as well as the severe or sustained degradation of such ecosystems (e.g., drainage of peatlands or major alteration of grasslands due to livestock production) (Source: [Accountability Framework definitions](#))
  - **Deforestation** - The conversion of natural forests to agriculture, tree plantations, livestock production, or other land uses, as well as severe or sustained degradation (Source: [Accountability Framework definitions](#))
  - **Degradation: Changes within a natural ecosystem that significantly and negatively affect its species composition, structure, and/or function and reduce the ecosystem's capacity to supply products, support biodiversity, and/or deliver ecosystem services.** (Source: [Accountability Framework definitions](#))
  - **Restoration:** The process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem, and its associated conservation values, that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed. (Source: [Accountability Framework definitions](#))
- **Recommended revisions and definitions**
  - Clarify use of other terms in interpretation guide below re: **Land sector emissions** and **Land-based emissions**
  - Update mentions of in interpretation guide below
  - **AFOLU emissions** - Emissions from Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use in accordance with [IPCC](#) and GHGs Protocol guidance on **SBTi FLAG** categorises **AFOLU emissions as land-use change and land-management emissions.**
- **Nature-related risks**
  - **Nature-related risk assessment**
    - From [TNFD framework](#), pag 33:
      - **Nature-related risk:** the potential threats posed to an organisation linked to its, and other organisations', dependencies on nature and nature impacts. These can derive from physical, transition and systemic risks.
  - **Forests-related risk exposure**
    - From [AFi definitions](#), pg. 21:
      - **Risk** - The probability of a potential adverse impact combined with its potential seriousness.
      - **Risk assessment** - A systematic process of evaluating potential risk in a company's current or future operations, supply chains, and investments.
    - (In the context of the Accountability Framework, this term refers to the assessment of risk of non-compliance with the company commitments or applicable law related to the Accountability Framework's scope, as well as adverse impacts to internationally recognised human rights. This is different from the use of the term in a general business context, where it refers to the assessment of financial risks and the drivers of such risk (e.g., legal risk, credit risk, reputation risk, and others). Risk of adverse social and environmental impacts, including non-compliance.)
- **Perverse subsidies**

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## Interpretation guide

### Pledge

#### *Set and disclose climate targets and report progress*

- a) Set and disclose short-term (5-10 years) and long-term (e.g., mid-century) science-based climate targets aligned with 1.5°C mitigation pathways and with the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – namely the IPCC Shared Socio-economic Pathways 1 or 2 (SSP1 or SSP2) with no or limited overshoot.<sup>1</sup>
- b) Set and disclose targets to remove or “neutralise” any residual emissions<sup>2</sup> ahead of mid-century in alignment with 1.5°C mitigation pathways SSP1 or SSP2 with low or no overshoot.
- c) Set and disclose targets that go beyond abatement and neutralisation to also mitigate emissions outside the value chain of the company, for example through direct conservation finance or through high integrity carbon credit purchases (see #6 below).
- d) Include land sector emissions in target-setting processes and include Scope 3 emissions where more than 40% of total emissions are found in the value chain, following the SBTi FLAG guidance or equivalent.
- e) Annually disclose performance against targets and demonstrate progress towards achievement over time.

#### *Protect forests, wetlands and other natural ecosystems*

- a. Set commitments to achieve and maintain operations and supply chains free of deforestation by 2025 at the latest, guided by for example, the definitions and principles from the Accountability Framework initiative (AFi).<sup>3</sup>
- b. Set commitments to achieve and maintain operations and supply chains free of natural ecosystem conversion by 2025 at the latest, guided by for example, the definitions and principles from the AFi.
- c. Support healthy landscapes across value chains and surrounding/impacted areas, avoiding or reducing with a view to phasing out activities that lead to ecosystem degradation, including wetlands’ drainage<sup>4</sup> and degradation of soil and water resources<sup>5</sup>.
- d. Support conservation of forests, wetlands and other ecosystems in areas in which the company operates or sources materials, including by:
  - Participating in relevant landscape and jurisdictional initiatives;
  - Investing in/contributing to conservation projects following high quality principles proposed by recognized organisations; and,
  - Supporting conservation finance mechanisms, including at landscape and jurisdictional levels.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

<sup>2</sup> Emissions sources that remain unabated in a specific year of a mitigation scenario. Long-term SBTs are consistent with the level of residual emissions in the year of global or sector net-zero in 1.5°C-aligned mitigation pathways with low or no overshoot.

<sup>3</sup> <https://accountability-framework.org/core-principles/1-protection-of-forests-and-other-natural-ecosystems/>

<sup>4</sup> For instance, peatlands drainage and consequent fires, are responsible for approximately 5% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, in accordance to IPCC 2014 ( [AR5 Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change — IPCC](#))

<sup>5</sup> <https://research.wri.org/gfr/forest-condition-indicators/forest-degradation>

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### Plan

#### *Develop and disclose climate transition plans and mitigation strategies to meet land sector emissions targets*

- a) Plans should follow the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, reduce, remove and offset value chain emissions, and disclose how reductions will be accounted for across those approaches.
- b) Plans should include actions for achieving these targets, prioritising deep emission reductions within the company's value chain, while in parallel transparently engaging in beyond value chain mitigation (including climate finance and/procurement of high integrity carbon credits) in light of unabated value chain emissions during the transition to net zero and by neutralising residual emissions at the net zero target date.
- c) Mitigation strategies should adhere to robust social and environmental principles, ensuring amongst others, protection and/or restoration of naturally occurring ecosystems, robust social safeguards, and protection of biodiversity, amongst others. Land-based climate strategies should prioritise interventions that help preserve, restore and enhance ecosystem carbon stocks.

Disclose publicly details of procedures to nature-related risk assessment as they are needed to assess the thoroughness of a company's understanding of its risk exposure, including by improving risk-screening and using landscape scale scenarios and planning approaches. In particular, they should (where possible in their annual financial reports and accounts) publicly disclose:

- a) Coverage and content of nature-related risk assessment (full/partial; direct operations/supply chains)
- b) Frequency and horizon
- c) Tools and methods used (e.g., TNFD's LEAP Nature Risk Assessment Approach)
- d) Issues considered in risk assessment
- e) Stakeholders considered in risk assessment
- f) Nature-related risks and opportunities with potential to have substantive financial or strategic impact on business.
- g) Expectations and obligations for investment in activities and practices that decrease emissions, protect carbon stocks in ecosystems, or enhance removals in ecosystems.
- h) Expectations and obligations for opting out of and advocating against perverse subsidies
- i) Expectations and obligations for divesting from activities and practices that contribute to land-use emissions

Mitigation strategies should adhere to robust social and environmental principles, ensuring amongst others, protection and/or restoration of naturally occurring ecosystems, robust social safeguards, and protection of biodiversity, amongst others. Land-based climate strategies should prioritise interventions that help preserve, restore and enhance existing terrestrial carbon stocks.

### Proceed

#### *Engage suppliers to reduce land management emissions and increase carbon removals within value chains*

- a. Incentivize and support suppliers to adopt and implement agricultural practices which reduce methane and nitrous oxide emissions through activities such as improved fertiliser and manure management, animal feed mix additives and optimization, phase-out drainage-based land-use on peatlands, and low-emission rice cultivation techniques. Placing an emphasis on immediately addressing short lived climate pollutants such as methane will

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[increase the likelihood](#) we keep a 1.5 pathway within reach. The land sector is the [primary driver](#) of the increase in global methane emissions since 2006 and is the leading source of methane emissions globally.

- b. Incentivize and support suppliers to transition to climate-friendly regenerative practices which increase land-based carbon removals, including low/no till practices, cover crops, agroforestry and improved rangeland management.

### *Restore forest, wetlands and other natural ecosystems*

- a) Support and participate in reforestation and / or natural ecosystem restoration on farms/plantations or in landscapes in which the company operates or sources materials,
- b) Contribute to beyond value chain mitigation efforts through restoration and / or natural ecosystem restoration in landscapes connected biophysically, ecologically and/or socio-economically to supply farm/ sheds such that they may provide direct or indirect benefits to the environmental sustainability and socio-economic health of the sourcing region.
- c) Participate in relevant landscape and jurisdictional initiatives and approaches that include ecosystem restoration in areas in which the company operates or sources materials
- d) Companies should supply biodiversity data collected through projects with relevant national and international portals, guided by for example the Equator Principles Guidance on Biodiversity Data Sharing or guidance provided by IUCN, GBIF or other recognised entities.

### *Carbon markets for nature*

- a) To enhance climate ambition and contribute to global net-zero, companies should invest in mitigation beyond their value-chains. Carbon markets are one tool that companies can use to increase their ambition, but should only be used in addition to science-aligned decarbonization across scopes 1, 2 and 3. If carbon credits are purchased: specify the quantitative contribution and role that these credit purchases play to meet targets in line with a 1.5°C mitigation pathways with low or no overshoot.
- b) Where carbon credits are purchased (whether they are from within the value chain or beyond the value chain), they should be of high quality ([see guidance in WEF document](#)) and should be independently verified against standards to ensure that they deliver real and quantifiable mitigation e.g., by (a) applying accurate, conservative baselines, (b) ensuring additionality, (c) including measures to fully address the risk of reversals, (d) minimising and account for leakage, (e) without double counting.
- c) Companies should report transparently on the use of carbon credits, verification standards used, and the quantity and quality of gross emissions and credits retired.
- d) Companies should pay a fair price for carbon credits- and enhance transparency- to account for the costs developing countries and private project developers incur in ensuring high integrity supply.
- e) Companies should seek to purchase carbon credits which support the most urgent and underfinanced parts of the low carbon transition, for example, restoring peatlands, ending deforestation and conversion of other natural ecosystems, and which deliver co-benefits linked to wider Sustainable Development Goals, including biodiversity and local livelihoods (for example by ensuring that rural communities are able to engage in and benefit from carbon markets). Investments should seek to align with the [NCS conservation hierarchy](#) and [IUCN guidance on NBS](#).
- f) Where purchasing avoided deforestation carbon credits, companies are encouraged to purchase units at or nested within a jurisdictional level where supply is available. Projects can continue to take place and should be encouraged while the jurisdictional mechanisms are put in place.



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- g) Companies should pool resources to aggregate demand for carbon credits to increase certainty and help drive systemic change and meaningful action against the climate crisis.
- h) Companies should commit to long term purchase agreements and publicly signal estimated future demand for credits to enable longer term project development on landscape level and high impact projects.

### Publish

#### Disclose climate targets, plans and progress

- a) Disclose short-term (5-10 years) and long-term (e.g., mid-century) science-based climate targets aligned with 1.5°C mitigation pathways and with the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – namely the IPCC Shared Socio-economic Pathways 1 or 2 (SSP1 or SSP2) with no or limited overshoot.<sup>6</sup>
- b) Disclose targets to remove or “neutralize” any residual emissions<sup>7</sup> ahead of mid-century in alignment with 1.5°C mitigation pathways SSP1 or SSP2 with low or no overshoot.
- c) Disclose targets that go beyond abatement and neutralization to also mitigate emissions outside the value chain of the company, for example through direct conservation finance or through high integrity carbon credit purchases.
- d) Annually disclose performance against targets and demonstrate progress towards achievement over time.

#### Disclose progress on the protection of forests, wetlands and other natural ecosystems

- a. Report progress toward commitments to achieve and maintain operations and supply chains free of deforestation by 2025 at the latest, guided by for example, the definitions and principles from the Accountability Framework initiative (AFi).<sup>8</sup> Progress on achieving deforestation-free commitments should align with the Consumer Goods Forum Forest Positive Coalition’s Public Information Requirements *including disclosure of:*
  - a. Zero deforestation policy commitment
  - b. Zero conversion policy commitment
  - c. Timebound action plans (integrated, eventually into board approved climate transition action plans)
  - d. Percentage of sourced commodities with known origin - disaggregated by commodity
  - e. Percentage of commodities sourced from high-risk origins or unknown origins - disaggregated by commodity
  - f. Annual update on activities to ensuring high risk supply is deforestation- and conversion-free (disaggregated by commodity), including description of forest monitoring and traceability systems being used
  - g. List of tier 1 suppliers

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

<sup>7</sup> Emissions sources that remain unabated in a specific year of a mitigation scenario. Long-term SBTs are consistent with the level of residual emissions in the year of global or sector net-zero in 1.5°C-aligned mitigation pathways with low or no overshoot.

<sup>8</sup> <https://accountability-framework.org/core-principles/1-protection-of-forests-and-other-natural-ecosystems/>

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- h. Investments into landscape or jurisdictional programs in support of zero deforestation commitments (detailed by geography, investment type, actions undertaken )
- b. Report progress toward commitments to achieve and maintain operations and supply chains free of natural ecosystem conversion by 2025 at the latest, guided by for example, the definitions and principles from the AFI,
- c. Report on progress toward commitments to avoid or reduce with a view to phasing out activities that lead to ecosystem degradation, including wetlands' drainage and degradation of soil and water resources.

### *Disclose the procedure of nature-related risk assessment, substantial nature-related risks, and opportunities*

Companies should provide details of procedures to nature-related risk assessment as they are needed to assess the thoroughness of a company's understanding of its risk exposure, including by improving risk-screening and using landscape scale scenarios and planning approaches.

If companies intend to also report on biodiversity-related risks, we recommend use of the Carbon Disclosure Standards Board's Biodiversity standard and the related disclosure recommendations on risks and opportunity: <https://www.cdsb.net/biodiversity>.

## Empowerment & Equity

### *Environmental safeguards*

Companies should ensure that their conservation and restoration activities avoid harm, reduce potential negative impacts and generate positive impacts to biodiversity and water-related ecosystems, including by:

- a) Identifying and considering key ecosystem services, high conservation value (HCV) areas, Ramsar sites and other wetlands of key importance, ensuring there are no unintended negative consequences on water-related ecosystems or biodiversity, per IFC Performance Standard 6.
- b) Ensuring that restoration principles are followed and that restoration activities utilise native species or species which are well-suited for the project location and always avoid using invasive species, following established good practice such as the Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy and the [IUCN Policy on Biodiversity Offsets](#)
- c) Ensuring that Nature-based solutions are implemented following the principles outlined in the [IUCN Global Standard on Nature-based Solutions](#).
- d) Ensuring restoration activities utilise an appropriate diversity of species.
- e) Opportunities to enhance ecosystem integrity and connectivity are identified and incorporated
- f) Monitoring includes periodic assessments of unintended adverse consequences on nature arising from their conservation and restoration activities
- g) Actions directly respond to evidence-based assessment of the current state of the ecosystem and prevailing drivers of degradation and loss

### *Social safeguards to support healthy, inclusive, and resilient livelihoods and economies*

Companies should ensure that their conservation, restoration, and financing activities avoid harm and generate positive impacts to indigenous peoples and local communities where they are undertaken by:

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- a) Ensuring due consideration of the socio-economical system, following norms and guidance established in recognised standards and international good practice such as the IFC Performance Standards, Equator Principles, and CDC group's ESG Toolkit.
- b) Ensuring clear land title or delineation of land rights in the project location. In particular, land tenure rights for indigenous peoples and local communities should be respected and strengthened, following IFC PS7 and practices defined in the UN Guiding Principles for Business & Human Rights (UNGP).
- c) Ensuring active participation of indigenous peoples and local communities and free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) (per recognised standards such as PS7 and legal benchmarking of local best practice), in the design and implementation of the project, with attention to shared power and decision-making.
- d) Ensuring equitable sharing of monetary and/or non-monetary benefits from the project/ jurisdictional approaches, following for example the Nagoya Protocol on Access & Benefit Sharing and related international guidance.
- e) Ensuring accessible grievance mechanisms in line with the UN Guiding Principles for Business & Human Rights (UNGP).
- f) Ensuring access to competent legal counsel during project design and implementation and can undertake a legal review of documents, such as contracts and agreements.

### ***Just transition***

- a) Companies should consider the impacts of transitioning to a lower-carbon business model on their workers and communities.
- b) Companies should invest in transitional pathways that provide decent and equitable livelihoods.

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### Recommended Resources

- [SBTi Forest, Land, and Agriculture \(FLAG\) Guidance](#) (Draft for public consultation - January 2022)
- [Greenhouse Gas Protocol \(GHG\) Corporate Value Chain \(Scope 3\) Accounting and Reporting Standard: Supplement to the GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard](#)
- [Greenhouse Gas Protocol Land Sector and Removals Guidance](#) (Draft for pilot testing and consultation out June 2022)
- [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures \(TNFD\) LEAP Nature Risk Assessment Approach](#)
- [Accountability Framework initiative \(AFi\)](#)