get nature positive

From Concrete to Biodiversity

Get Nature Positive – Technical documentation

With ‘Get Nature Positive’, biodiversity deficits in real estate can be equalized fully. This is done with newly created or preserved natural areas on site as well as compensation projects in Switzerland. The biodiversity offsetting model used achieves a net positive effect, meaning more biodiversity is created than is lost. Companies, private individuals and the public sector can thus make a contribution to a nature-positive world.

With ‘Get Nature Positive’, a property's biodiversity deficit can be fully offset. This is achieved by offsetting all of a property's sealed surfaces with nature projects in Switzerland and ecologically enhancing the surrounding green spaces. The applied in- and offsetting model achieves a net positive effect - in other words, more biodiversity is created than is lost. Companies, private individuals and the public sector can thus make a contribution to a nature-positive world.

Two certificates are offered: ‘Get Nature Positive’ and ‘Get Nature Positive Premium’, with the latter building on the former. The ‘Get Nature Positive’ certificate requires 120% of the sealed surface area of a property to be offset. To obtain the ‘Get Nature Positive Premium’ certificate, strict requirements are placed on the green space in addition to offsetting the sealed surface.

Both certificates can be awarded to properties with new buildings as well as to properties with existing buildings.

Requirements for the ‘Get Nature Positive’ certificate

1. Definition of the project perimeter

The project perimeter generally corresponds to one building plot/parcel.

- The project perimeter may cover several parcels if a building or complex of buildings extends over several parcels.
- In the case of very large parcels of land, e.g. outside the building zone, the project perimeter may be reduced to the area affected by the project.
- If only some of the buildings within a parcel are to be certified, the parcel can be divided.

2. Assessment of initial state (only for new buildings)

Construction projects on natural areas that are protected in accordance with Annex 1 NHV of the Swiss nature conservation ordonnance or those that have a biotope value of 6 (see Table 1), cannot be certified by GNP. GNP may grant exceptions in the case of habitats that can be replaced within 25 years AND appropriate replacement is provided in consultation with the municipality or canton. The basis for checking the initial status is the respective communal or cantonal nature inventory as well as aerial photographs or photos. If the presence of valuable habitats cannot be ruled out, GNP carries out an on-site inspection.

In addition to the habitat, it is checked if possible whether protected species such as bats or birds that breed in buildings are registered on the plot. The communal or cantonal nature inventories are consulted for this purpose. If no inventory is publicly accessible, the responsible communal authority is consulted. If species occurrences are known, certification is only possible if prior compensation or resettlement measures have been carried out in consultation with the municipality and canton. If species occurrences are only discovered during the construction phase, protective measures must be

taken immediately in consultation with the relevant experts. If this is not done, the certificate can be subsequently withdrawn.

3. Assessment of sealed surfaces

All sealed surfaces within the project perimeter are recorded, measured and added up (unit: square meter). For new construction projects, the environmental plan or planting plan is used as a database. For existing, retroactively certified sealed areas, the actual area is recorded based on the official survey (buildings, parking spaces, streets) and current orthophotos (surrounding).
According to the Federal Statistical Office, sealed surfaces include buildings (including greenhouses) and paved surfaces such as asphalt, concrete, artificial gravel or stone surfaces, etc. According to the biotope type mapping method we use, these areas have a biotope value of 0 or 1. These areas must be offset.
Sealed areas that are covered by tree crowns or other vegetation do not have to be compensated. In the case of new buildings, the target condition according to the environmental or planting plan applies. The same applies to gravel areas or grass pavers that are to be covered with vegetation.

4. Deduction of ecologically valuable areas on the roofs and facades of buildings

Ecologically valuable areas on roofs or facades of buildings can be deducted from the total sealed area (see Table 2).

5. Calculation of the area to be compensated, time factor

The sealed areas (step 3) minus the deductions (step 4) are no longer permanently available to nature as a habitat and should be compensated with newly created, ecologically valuable nature areas. The biological value of the habitats increases over time. A time factor of 1.2 is applied across the board to ensure that the certificate is fully backed by natural values from the outset. Consequently, the sealed areas are compensated with 120% nature areas. According to Table 3 and the report on the evaluation method by Hintermann & Weber (2017), this corresponds to an average habitat development period of 10-25 years.

6. Matching with compensation project

The compensation area is measured in m^2. Newly created or ecologically enhanced nature areas in Switzerland with a biotope value of 4 to 6 (Table 1) that will be maintained for at least 25 years are eligible. In terms of ecological quality, these natural areas that are also suitable for ecological compensation schemes requested by some local or cantonal authorities (ökologischer Ausgleich).

The nature project must achieve a significant ecological improvement of at least one quality level (+ 1 biotope value). The following additional quality requirements also apply:

- Compensation is carried out by means of newly created nature areas (nature projects) in Switzerland, if possible in the same or a directly adjacent biogeographical region (division into 6 regions according to FOEN 2022). The nature areas must be precisely located.
- The minimum area of nature projects is 5000 m^2. Justified exceptions are possible.
- Ecologically meaningful, site-appropriate habitats are created.
- Where appropriate, different habitats are created within a nature project.
- The nature projects should contribute to better connectivity of habitats in the landscape.
- Isolated areas in settlement areas, areas in high mountain regions, projects on protected cropland (Fruchtfolgeflächen FFF) that lead to compensation requirements, projects requiring approval without a permit, etc. can be excluded by GNP.

Further habitat-specific quality requirements are regulated in an agreement between GNP and the land manager (farmer, forester…) or landowner.

7. Eligibility of compensation areas created by the investor
Compensation areas with biotope values of 4-6 (see Table 3), which are created by investors themselves, can also be credited. The areas must be located outside the project perimeter and their creation must not date back more than 2 years. No minimum area is required.

8. Calculation of the certification fee and quality assurance contribution
The fee for the 'Get Nature Positive' certificate (Index 2024) is calculated based on the number of m^2 of sealed area to be offset. It amounts to CHF 15 per m^2 for pilot projects (Index 2024). The fee is used to finance advice by GNP, the planning and implementation of the project by the project partner, communication by GNP (website, social media) and the fees for the certification body. A maximum of 30% of the fee is used for GNP's administrative costs. At least 10% of the fee is used to finance a biodiversity and guarantee fund. This enables GNP to realize particularly complex, more costly nature areas and to create reserve areas in advance. The latter allows GNP to replace natural areas that may be lost, ensuring that the certificates are backed by natural values at all times.

With an annual quality assurance contribution of CHF 0.20 per m^2, the positive development of the nature area can be ensured in the long term. The quality assurance contribution is usually paid in one instalment over 25 years (CHF 5 per m^2). This contribution is used to finance monitoring, the validation of the monitoring report by the certification body and a success fee for the project partner.

9. Conditions for issuing the 'Get Nature Positive' certificate
If the following conditions are met, the 'Get Nature Positive' certificate can be issued.

- No protected habitats or species occurrences are destroyed or impaired during the new construction of the property (see point 2).
- The sealed areas of the property are fully compensated for with nature projects in accordance with the applicable requirements (point 6).

10. Issue of the 'Get Nature Positive' certificate by the certification body
As soon as the investor has signed the certification contract and paid the certification fee, the certification body issues a certificate with the following information:

> XY AG has offset the sealed area for the property on **x street** in **LOCATION 1** with a total of **x m^2** by creating an ecologically valuable nature area in **LOCATION ^{2}**. The ecologically valuable planted flat roof and the swallow nest boxes are credited as **x m^2**. The property receives the certificate 'Get Nature Positive'.

Special case : Biodiversity compensation is carried out entirely by the investor
If the investor creates sufficiently large nature areas outside the project perimeter that meet the GNP criteria (step 6), GNP does not have to create new nature areas of its own. However, there are costs for the area calculation and certification. In this case, the certification fee is CHF 5000.-. It also covers the first two monitoring sessions in the first and second year after certification. Further monitoring takes place 5 years after the contract is signed and then every 5 years thereafter. A monitoring fee of 1500.- is charged for each of these monitorings (index 2024). Additional consultancy services are charged as required.

Requirements for the ‘Get Nature Positive Premium’ certificate

1. Assessment of the initial state of the green spaces of a property

All areas within the project perimeter are assessed and categorized into biotope types (Table 2). Ideally, this is done during an inspection prior to the start of construction work or green space restoration. If this is not possible, up-to-date aerial photographs, photos or other data sources should be used.

Sealed areas covered by tree crowns are counted as green space (biotope type ‘tree grid’). Tree crowns that overhang the plot boundary are not taken into account.

All unsealed areas are used to calculate the average biotope value. For this purpose, each subarea is multiplied by the respective biotope value. The products calculated in this way are added together and divided by the total area of unsealed are.

Special case: green spaces are of particularly high ecological quality

If the average ecological value of a property's surroundings corresponds to a biotope value of 4 or higher, the initial state is considered the target state. In the case the focus is on maintaining the already very high quality. Additional green space improvement projects are not necessary in this case.

2. Assessment and evaluation the target state of the green spaces

Areas within the project perimeter are designated a fitting biotope type (Table 2). Ideally, this is done during an inspection after completion of the construction work or green space restoration. If necessary, however, a pre-certificate can already be drawn up on the basis of environmental or planting plans.

The target state does not have to be achieved at the time of certification. Freshly sown flower meadows are assessed on the basis of the seed mixtures used. In the case of freshly planted trees, the canopy area specified in the planting plan is decisive. Any negative developments are identified through monitoring and will be addressed in the recertification process.

The average biotope value is calculated in the same way as described in step 1.

3. Mimimum requirements for issuing the ‘Get Nature Positive Premium’ certificate

If the following conditions are met, the ‘Get Nature Positive’ certificate can be issued.

- All sealed areas have been compensated for with nature projects. The newly created nature areas meet the conditions defined by GNP for the ‘Get Nature Positive’ certificate.
- On average, the unsealed area achieves at least a biotope value of 3.
- An improvement of at least 0.5 biotope value is achieved compared to the initial state (delta). The improvement may be less if an average biotope value of 4 is achieved.
- If an existing green space achieves an average biotope value of 4 or more, no green space improvement project needs to be implemented and no additional improvement needs to be achieved (see special case).

4. Certification fee for the ‘Get Nature Positive Premium’ certificate

GNP charges a certification fee of CHF 5000 (as of 2024) per property for the ‘Get Nature Positive Premium’ certificate. The fee is used for the analysis and evaluation of the biodiversity of the green space before and after the redesign/improvement, consulting to a limited extent, the report, the expenses of the certification body, the monitoring in the first and second year after certification and communication by GNP (website, social media) relating to the certification.

For recertification every five years, fee of CHF 3000 is requested (index 2024). The fee is used for the monitoring, consisting of an on-site inspection together with the person responsible for the green space, the monitoring report in text and image, the expenses of the certification body and the communication by GNP (website, social media) relating to the recertification.

5. Issue of the 'Get Nature Positive Premium' certificate by the certification body

Once the certification agreement between the investor and GNP has been signed and the certificate fee has been paid by the investor, the certification body issues a certificate with the following information:

> The green space created by **XY AG** on **y-street** in **location A** meets high ecological requirements and achieves an average **biotope value of x.x.** In addition, all sealed areas have been fully compensated with nature projects in Switzerland. The property is awarded the "Get Nature Positive Premium" certificate

Table 1: Biotope values and habitat types

Biotope value initial state	**Nature areas (habitat types)**
No value (Biotope value 0, 1)	Sealed surfaces Roads Buildings Stone paving Sports ground Construction site Animal enclosure Neophytic meadow
Low ecological value (Biotope value 2)	Woodland edge lacking ecological structures Wood storage area Artificial/non-natural stream Artificial/non-natural river Ornamental pond, sewage treatment plants, SABA Intensively manged, fertilised meadow and pasture Field Vegetable and other horticultural land Flower gardening area Tree nursery Trellis fruit plantation Berry plantation Vineyard without terraces Agricultural storage area Species-poor ruderal meadow Species-poor lawn (utility lawn) Ornamental shrubbs/ hedge of predominantly non-native woody species Ornamental hedge/ pruned hedge Settlement grove of predominantly non-native tree species Tree grid without tree discs Tree grid with lawn Tree-rich/grid with gravel Flower bed/herbaceous border Fruit and vegetable garden Low-species ornamental garden Intensively managed park Other sports, play and leisure facilities Green space with lacking ecological structures Low-species sedum roof vegetation Fertilised roof vegetation Area with unpaved wall gravel or sand Commercial area (small businesses and commercial storage areas)
Medium ecological value (Biotope value 3)	Woodland edge lacking ecological structure with potential for enhancement Blackberry shrub Successional shrub Heavily impaired stream

	Heavily impaired river Heavily impaired water body of natural origin Tall herbaceous meadow with goldenrod Lean bracken meadow Structurally poor and species-poor rough pasture Intensive grassland on former fenland sites Shady nutrient-poor meadow Species-rich fallow Terraced vineyard Ruderal grassland in nutrient-rich, fresh to moist locations Ruderal grassland of nutrient-rich, fresh to moist sites with woody plants Semi-ruderal grass and herbaceous meadow in moist locations Semi-ruderal grass and herbaceous meadow in medium locations Species-rich lawn (flowering lawn) Ornamental shrubbery/hedge of predominantly native woody species lacking ecological structures Urban grove of predominantly native tree species lacking ecological structures Tree grid with tree discs (incl. asphalt in between) Tree grid with old trees without tree discs Tree grid with ornamental hedge Grid of trees with fertilised grassland Cottage garden House garden Parklike cemetery Natural stone wall Species-rich sedum roof vegetation
Ecologically valuable (Biotope value 4)	Intensively managed forest Mature single tree Avenue with mature trees High-trunk orchard with fertilised meadow Watercourse Little affected stream Little affected river Meadow ditch Near-natural, nutrient-rich water body Moist *Arrhenatherum elatius* meadow Species-poor *Arrhenatherum elatius* meadow Semi-ruderal grassland and herbaceous meadow in alternately moist locations Structurally rich ornamental shrubbery/hedge of predominantly native woody species Structurally-rich grove of predominantly native tree species Tree grid with ruderal undergrowth Tree grid with mature trees and tree discs Tree grid with mature trees and ornamental hedge Tree grid with mature trees and lawn Grid of trees with mature trees and gravelled ground Tree grid with a meadow of fruit trees Grid of trees with mature trees and a meadow Tree grid with species-rich, semi-ruderal herbaceous meadow

	Species-rich garden with mature trees Allotment/community garden Structurally rich green area Ruderal roof vegetation Meadow-like roof vegetation
(Biotope value 5)	Stepped forest edge Scrub of dry and warm locations mesophilic shrubs willow marsh shrubs shrubby hedge Shrub-tree hedge Tree hedge Near-natural field grove High-trunk orchard of ecological quality level II (CH agricultural scheme) with *Arrhenatherum elatius* meadow Natural/near-natural stream Natural/near-natural river Near-natural small water body Near-natural, nutrient-poor standing water of natural origin Nutrient-rich swamp Population of blunt-leaved rush (*Carex atrofusca*) Pioneer vegetation of muddy wetland Vegetation on natural rock *Arrhenatherum elatius* meadow with ecological quality level II (CH agricultural scheme) Structurally rich rough pasture Ruderal meadow in dry and warm locations with woody plants Semi-ruderal grass and herbaceous meadow in dry locations Tree grid with mature trees and ruderal undergrowth Tree grid with mature trees and *Arrhenatherum elatius* meadow Tree row/grid with *Arrhenatherum elatius* meadow of ecological quality level II (CH agricultural scheme) Tree grid with mature trees and species-rich, semi-ruderal herbaceous meadow Wildlife garden Old landscape park
Exclusion due to legal replacement obligation (Biotope value 5)	*Caltha palustris* meadow typical willow meadow shrub Ruderal vegetation of dry and warm locations *Phalaris arundinacea* riverside reedbed Sweet-grass (*glyceria sp.*) reedbed Tall herbaceous meadow with *Filipendula ulmaria*
Exclusion because hardly or not at all replaceable (Biotope value 6)	Forest types protected by Swiss Nature Conservation Law (NHG) Tapered woodland edge exposed to the south Shrub hedge with ecological quality II level (CH agricultural scheme) Shrub-tree hedge with ecological quality level II (CH agricultural scheme) High trunk garden with old trees High-trunk orchard with nutrient-poor meadow

	Tree row/grid with old trees on *Arrhenatherum elatius* meadow with ecological quality level II (CH agricultural scheme) River gravel pioneer meadow Sedimentation area of nutrient-poor water body with underwater vegetation Floating wetland vegetation Reedbed with siltation area *Schonoplectus lacustris* reedbed Typha/bulrushes Reed beds Large sedge-reeds with hummocks (*Magnocaricion*) Large sedge-meadow outside water level fluctuations Large sedge-reed with marsh sedge Large sedge-reed bed with rush Large sedge-reed with hairy sedge Davall's sedge reed Head rush reed (*Schoenus nigricans*) Small sedge meadow with hedgehog grass (*Carex flava*) Acidic small sedge meadow Moist moor grass meadow (*Molinia cerulae*) with small sedges Dry moor grass meadow (*Molinia cerulae*) with small sedges Dry moor grass meadow (*Molinia cerulae*) on peat soil Chalk heath Other rough grassland Alternately dry nutrient-poor meadow Moderately dry nutrient-poor meadow Structurally rich species-rich rough pasture

Habitat types: Quadra GmbH/Grünstadt Zürich (Link); Biotope values: Stadtgrün, St.Gallen 2024

Table 2: Eligibility of biodiversity measures on roofs or facades of buildings

Habitats and structures	**Unit**	**Eligibility**
Well-established, near-natural green flat roofs, balconies or terraces with a build-up of ≥12 cm (Checkliste Zürich)	area in m^2	half
Well-established, near-natural green flat roofs, balconies or terraces with a build-up of at least 20 cm	area in m^2	full
green facades or walls with at least one native species	vertical area in m^2	full
Promotion of specific species: nesting boxes for birds, boxes for bats, etc.	per object	2 m^2

Table 3: Eligibility of natural habitats in compensation projects

Lebensräume und Strukturen	Unit	Biotope value	Regeneration time*
Raised bog	area in m^2	6	> 200 years
Fen	area in m^2	6	10-25 years
Reed grass meadow with *molinia caerulea*	area in m^2	6	10-25 years
Tall herbaceous meadow e.g. with *Filipendula ulmaria*	area in m^2	5	5-10 years
Marsh meadow with *Caltha palustris*	area in m^2	4	5-10 years
Moist *Arrhenatherum elatius* meadow	area in m^2	4	5-10 years
Species poor *Arrhenatherum elatius* meadow	area in m^2	4	5-10 years
Arrhenatherum elatius meadow (typical hay meadow)	area in m^2	4-5	10-25 years
Alternating dry nutrient-poor meadow	area in m^2	6	10-25 years
Moderately dry nutrient-poor meadow	area in m^2	6	25-50 years
Structurally rich rough pasture (5-20% structures)	area in m^2	5	5-10 years
Structurally rich, species-rich rough pasture ecological quality level II (5-20% structures, 6 indicator plants)	area in m^2	6	10-25 years
High-trunk orchards (ecological quality level II criteria, without additional areas)	100 m^2/ tree	5-6	25-50 years
Single trees, avenues or grove with native and climate adapted European species	Potential crown area in m^2	4-5	50-100 years
Wild hedges with a diverse mix of native species including herbaceous buffer strips	area in m^2	5	10-25 years
Floodplain willow scrub	area in m^2	5	5-10 years
Near-natural water body, small biotopes or ponds with buffer strips	area in m^2, 2m buffer	4-6	5-10 years
Near-natural streams	area in m^2 incl. legal water body buffer	5	5-10 years
Ecologically valuable forest (e.g. forest pasture, natural or special forest reserves)	area in m^2	5-6	25-200 years
Tapered woodland edge	Laufmeter	5-6	10-25 years
Non-grouted dry stone walls	Vertical area of wall in m^2	Not assessed	< 5 years
Small ecological structures	area in m^2	Not assessed	< 5 years
Nesting boxes for birds or bats	2 m^2 per nesting aid	Not assessed	< 5 years
Species-rich ruderal meadows	area in m^2	5	< 5 years
Wild herbaceous flower bed (semi-ruderal herbaceous meadow)	area in m^2	4	< 5 years

* Regeneration times: Infoflora, Red list of habitats Switzerland 2016 (supplemented by less rare habitats).