



Nature-conscious Governance

Conceptual Litepaper



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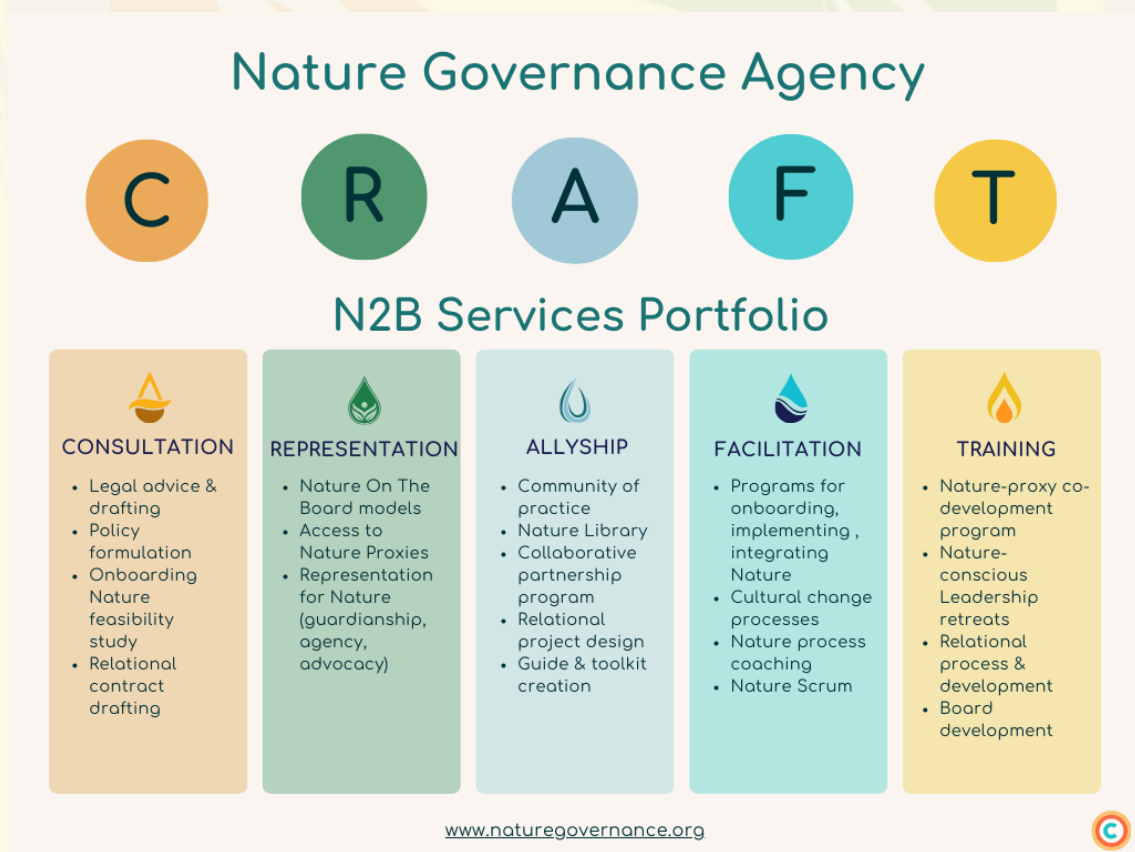
Conceptual Overview

1. Who we are

The Voice - The Vote - The Way of Nature.

The [Earth Law Center](#), through advocacy, consulting and education, advances ecocentric laws, policies, and governance for the well-being of the Earth community. The [Nature Governance Agency](#) (NGA) is a program of ELC, with the mission to empower leaders to make wise decisions - *for, with, and as* Nature. Our vision is to promote a Nature-conscious integration and practice across all human-made systems of governance.

NGA is the first organization to offer Nature-to-Business (N2B) services that bring the voice, the vote and the way of Nature to private and public enterprises. Our CRAFT services portfolio encompasses: Consultancy, Representation, Allyship, Facilitation, Training. Our approach is ecocentric, systemic, integral¹, and holistic as we guide, accompany and support corporations, businesses and organizations to lead the transition, transformation and legacy for an Earth-centered society.



¹ Inspired and adapted from Ken Wilber (2000). *A theory of everything: An integral vision for business, politics, science and spirituality* (Shambhala Publications).



2. What does Nature Governance mean?

Nature Governance is based on the concept, framework and practice developed by the Earth Law Center's Nature Governance Agency (NGA) for Nature-positive governance. Nature-consciousness is integrated within a governance system and practice through the Voice, the Vote and the Way of Nature.

Nature-conscious governance is an emergent field of research and practice that can be described as a form of ecological governance, based on 4 organizing principles: purpose, design, process, and relationships.² The focus is on internal, agential, contextual and cultural dynamics, as driving forces for generative and emergent Nature-positive behaviors and processes change.³

Where environmental governance resorts to rules, laws, policies (and so on) to shape human behavior in the use and management of natural resources;⁴ Nature-conscious governance, as developed by NGA, adopts a responsibility-based, purpose-led and relational approach to human behaviors and processes for holistic ecological benefits.

NGA was built to remind us we are Nature: interconnected, interrelated and interdependent within a global web of life.⁵ 'We' means human and beyond-human beings, communities, peoples, organisms that together constitute the community of life on Earth; and so Nature, in the broadest and most ecological sense of the term, means all life on and as Earth. The practice of Nature Governance is therefore the practice of making intentional Nature-inspired and ecocentric wise decisions for Nature-positive human action and behavior, towards global common good.

Nature-conscious governance is not the governance of Nature by humans; it is instead Nature informing, guiding and thus integrating within the governance systems of public and private organizations. Nature informs, guides and is integrated within human systems (corporations, businesses, organizations, etc.). Human representatives (Nature proxies) act as the agents of the multifaceted and diverse voices of Nature; interpreting, revealing and sharing the many ways of being from a Nature perspective. Nature proxies facilitate the voice, vote and way of Nature as a key stakeholder within human systems.


Curious to learn more? Check out the programs offered by the [Nature Governance Agency](#), stay in the loop for potential collaboration opportunities, or sign up to access Nature Governance services. You can also directly email the NGA team at team@naturegovernance.org to learn how to integrate Nature governance into your corporate and organisational decision-making process.

² Robertson, P.J & Choi, T. (2010). Ecological Governance: Organizing principles for an Emergent Era. *Public Administration Review*. December 2010 *Special Review: Ecological Governance*, 89-99

³ Aggarwal, R.M. & Anderies J.M. (2023) Understanding how governance emerges in social-ecological systems: insights from archetype analysis. *Ecology and Society* 28(2):2

⁴ Bennett, N.J. & Satterfield, T. (2018) Environmental governance: A practical framework to guide design, evaluation, and analysis. *Conservation Letters*. 2018:11

⁵ Capra, F. (1996). *The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems*. New York: Anchor Books.



3. Why is it important for organizations to understand and have Nature governance?

As the current ecological crisis demands new ways of being, behaving, and belonging on planet Earth; novel agile forms of governance for these vulnerable times of uncertainty and complexity are needed - for this, transformative vision and strategy are the key ingredients to success.⁶

Under the old mechanistic competitive paradigm, human systems have created a significant imbalance in the world that constitutes a threat to all life on Earth. Human systems must learn to self-regulate responsibly for peaceful and harmonious living, within planetary boundaries for global health and wellbeing.

Businesses, corporations, and organizations are integral actors in efforts to lead the ecological transition - corporations are both dependent on and impacting on Nature as a whole. A failure to act will lead to repercussions including reputational damage; loss of citizen customer trust; loss of financing, financial and business opportunities; inability to recruit (this is happening with [Total, Shell](#), banks who are being shunned by a new generation of graduates); and more.⁷

Today, governance must be more than a passive accountability mechanism that is left open to claims of greenwashing, tokenism and solely performative actions.

The accountability dimension of Nature-conscious governance is seen as a lived experience that leads to meaningful and beneficial impact for all stakeholders involved, including Nature. Where conventional governance is concerned with the organization of power structures, Nature Governance is designed to empower decision-makers - at all levels of governance - to make wise decisions for Nature, with nature, as Nature.


Humanity and the non-human living world are interrelated and interdependent. Therefore, Nature-conscious Governance embraces a multiperspectival, holistic and integral approach. It is guided by the diverse understandings and values of Nature (e.g. worldviews, knowledge systems, broad values, specific values and value indicators).⁸

Nature-conscious governance is a practice in healing our systems and co-creating a better version of our world. It is an act of faith in our ability to become purpose-led regenerative agents of change, all while cultivating a balanced global ecosystem.

⁶ Andreta, E; Moretti PF; & Tondelli, L. (25.07.2022). The ecological transition needs new governance models. [Nature Italy](#)

⁷ McCraine, S; Anderson, C; Weber, C; and Shaw, R. (2019) The Nature of Risk. World Wildlife Fund.

⁸ IPBES (2023). Summary for Policymakers of the Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Roy, H. E., Pauchard, A., Stoett, P., Renard Truong, T., Bacher, S., Galil, B. S., Hulme, P. E., Ikeda, T., Sankaran, K. V., McGeoch, M. A., Meyerson, L. A., Nuñez, M. A., Ordoñez, A., Rahlao, S. J., Schwindt, E., Seebens, H., Sheppard, A. W., and Vandvik, V. (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany.



4. What are the different ways to approach Nature Governance; and what does it mean to give Nature a voice and a vote?

Nature Governance adopts an approach that harnesses the power of organizations, businesses, corporations and institutions, as agents of change for Nature-positive transformation, through partnership, collaboration and cooperative methods.

Nature-conscious governance adheres to a holistic ecocentric worldview, whereby the whole of Nature, including living beings, life forms and ecosystems, have an intrinsic and inherent value, independent of the value they may represent to human life.⁹ Inspired by Earth law principles,¹⁰ Nature-conscious governance is committed to an ecozoic philosophy, framework and practice within human systems.

In order to practice Nature-conscious Governance, we rely on the Voice of Nature. This pathway aims to advance Nature's interests and agency, and to foster the expression of Nature's wisdom, ways and needs within human systems, through the representation of its diverse voices¹¹ via human proxies.¹²

Nature-conscious Governance is entrenched in the Voice of Nature movement, as its mission is to ensure Nature has a seat and a say in organizations, through a responsibility-based framework. Still, Nature Governance also operates at the intersection of Rights of Nature, as it promotes the creation of *de facto* stakeholder rights for Nature through private (contractual/company) law - especially where Nature is formally appointed as director with voting rights.

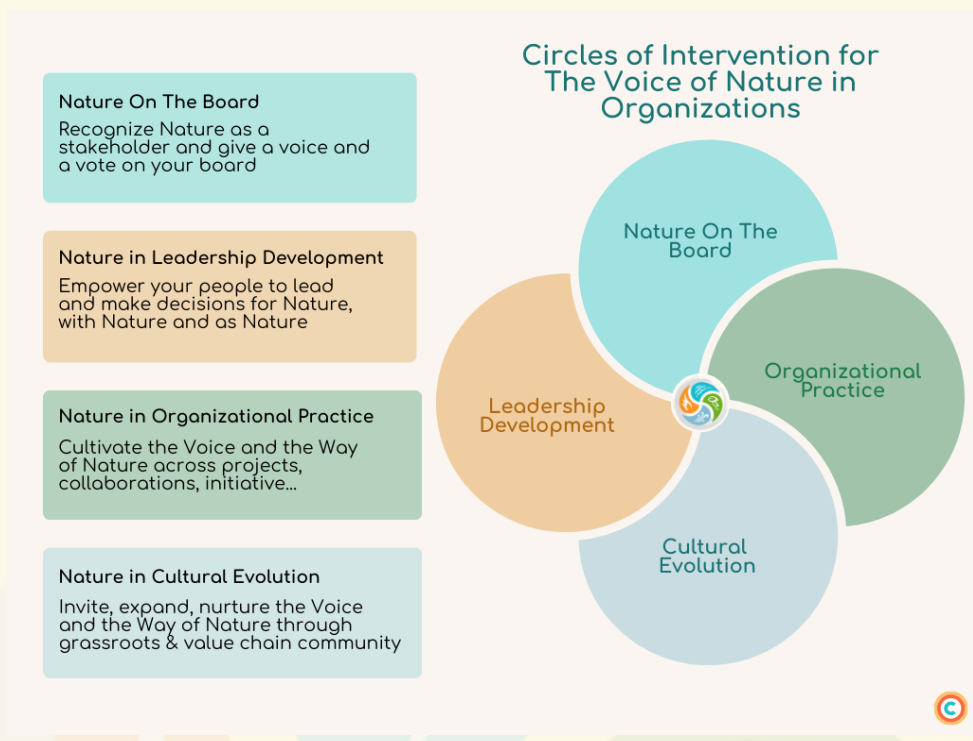
There are, however, other ways for Nature to be integrated within an organization, beside and beyond the boardroom. The four circles of interventions below encompass the four levels of governance across which Nature can be included in a holistic way: process, performance, people, and purpose.

⁹ Washington H, Taylor B, Kopnina H, Cryer P and Piccolo JJ (2017). Why ecocentrism is the key pathway to sustainability. *The Ecological Citizen* 1: Y-Z

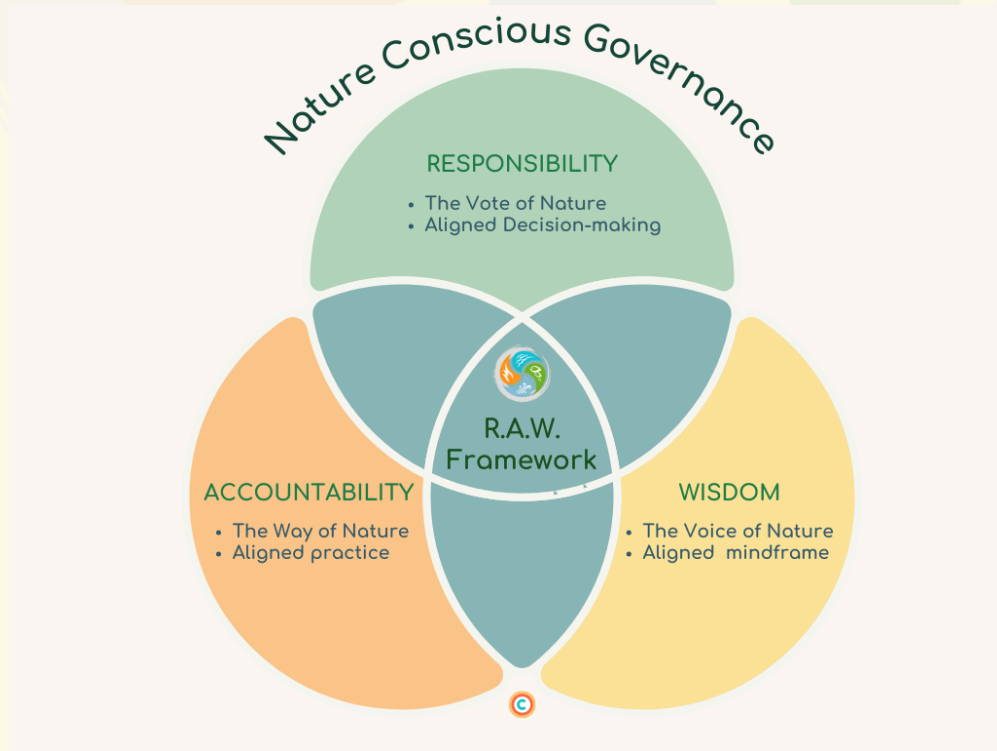
¹⁰ Zelle, A., Wilson, G., Adam, R., and Greene, H. (2020). *Earth Law: Emerging Ecocentric Law - A Guide for Practitioners* (2020, Wolters Kluwer).

¹¹ Voice of Nature; Conservation International Nature is speaking; WWF Voice for Nature

¹² Nature On The Board at Faith in Nature; House of Hackney



Traditional understanding of governance focuses on control, transparency, accountability and compliance. The framework of Nature-conscious Governance intends to disrupt that through its *R.A.W.* framework: based on the pillars of Responsibility, Accountability, and Wisdom. Through this updated methodology, Nature-conscious Governance will galvanize existing governing systems by encompassing relationality, empowerment, alignment, and leadership to make Nature-informed decisions within an organization.





5. What can organizations take-away from Faith in Nature pioneering Nature On The Board?

In 2022-2023, [Alexandra Pimor](#) (Ally) had the privilege to serve a cycle as co-proxy for *Nature as Director* on the board of [Faith in Nature](#), a British eco-beauty company. Their aim was to include the voice of Nature at the table, so that they could make better informed decisions for the benefit of the natural environment. As a proxy, Ally was tasked with representing Nature and facilitating the agency of its Voice, Vote and Way. Throughout her tenure, she asked herself the following questions: a) what and who is Nature?; b) what is the role of the voice of Nature?; and c) how can I serve as a proxy?

In that scenario, Nature was not merely perceived as an object or resource, but a subject of corporate rights and a stakeholder. By giving Nature a seat at the table of a human organization, as well as a voice and vote in the strategic direction of the company, the board set their business on a Nature-positive course.

It is important to acknowledge the complexity with the proxy position given the 3-fold relationship of duties and legal obligations between the Proxy, that represents Nature; Nature as Director, that now has a fiduciary responsibility to the company; and the Company, that has a duty to consider, respect and protect the interests of Nature. Given the balance of three separate responsibilities and interests, our R.A.W. framework promotes transparent conversations and alignment to make tangible decisions.

Through this experience, Ally learned that Nature-conscious governance is possible when we cultivate change from within: leaders, collective, organizations and systems. For that to happen, it will take courage and leadership for the change to occur, and this is what Nature-conscious Governance offers - effective and meaningful impact at the core.

6. What lessons can we glean since Nature On The Board was launched?

What we have learned so far is that starting with the vision for the purpose, role, mission and mandate of the Nature proxy is key. Establishing a strategy of change and a measure of successful transformation following the integration of the voice of Nature are essential elements. Practicing Nature-conscious Governance requires a mind shift that has to be supported, facilitated and cultivated at the individual, collective and organizational levels.

Bringing Nature into an organization - in whatever format - is not a destination in itself; it is the start of a journey of regenerative transformation.



Nature on the board is not a one-size-fits-all initiative; it requires businesses and organizations to do the work and be proactive imagineers in redefining a new 'business as usual.' The proactive nature of the strategy underpinning bringing Nature into an organization has two goals:

- to tackle greenwashing and tokenising risks undermining the initiative; and
- to ensure authenticity and integrity in the process across all levels of development and practice.

Therefore, Bringing Nature on a board, whilst incredibly innovative, is now a tested concept that companies and organizations can replicate, in their own way, according to their needs, and following their own purpose-led vision.

For those who are still doubting the significance of this evolutionary business model and governance practice, the key questions that organizations have to ask themselves are the following:

- a) Will they survive and still be relevant in the next 10 to 15 years?; and
- b) Are they on the right side of history and showing leadership?

Pragmatic Overview

Nature On The Board

Nature On The Board (NOTB) is a ground-breaking initiative that promotes the Voice, the Vote and the Way of Nature within organizations (businesses, corporations, institutions) for the common good.

What: A board seat for Nature

Nature is a stakeholder in human affairs that impact our global ecosystem. Through the NOTB initiative, organizations across sectors give Nature a seat and a say at the decision-making table, thus pioneering corporate rights for Nature within the existing jurisdictional legal framework.

How: Human proxy speaking as the voice.s of Nature

Nature is represented by a human being, who acts as a proxy for the voice.s of Nature, and may adopt one of the following representational approaches:



Current methods of representation include Nature appointment as a director, advisor, consultant, or golden shareholder on a board; with voting rights, a mandate and terms of references, as determined by the organization’s needs and constitutional structure. The list of current methods is not exhaustive. In this work, we see methods of representation grow and expand depending on organizational needs.

Through NGA’s Vision, Model and Strategy curriculum, we undergo a deep organizational structural review and update any constitutional, corporate and policy amendments *if, where and as* required (e.g. articles of associations, governance framework, voting protocols..).

On NGA’s [Dandelion Fellowship](#), a co-development program for Nature proxies, Fellows explore and co-learn about the voice.s of Nature (including their own in the context of a corporate setting). This intentionally curated journey builds off of system design principles and the practice of ongoing collaboration and facilitation to authentically represent Nature in organizations as a diverse, inclusive entity.

Why: Planet. People. Purpose. Prosperity.

Biodiversity loss and climate change are interrelated consequences of the imbalance caused by human activities. Both are interlinked issues that cannot be separated, and must be addressed systemically ([IPBES-IPCC 2021](#)).

The [Dasgupta Review \(2021\)](#) emphasized that ‘we are part of Nature, not separate from it’, and that our reliance on Nature for our economies, livelihoods and well-being make it our most precious asset.



[S&P](#) (2023) found that 85% of the world's largest companies are significantly dependent on Nature; leading an increasing number of investors, companies and stakeholders to acknowledge the interrelatedness of biodiversity, natural capital, ecosystem dependencies and climate strategy.

Since public and private enterprises are all (directly and indirectly) dependent on Nature, it is a matter of collective responsibility to show leadership in taking Nature-positive actions. This includes the practice of Nature-conscious governance to make better informed decisions, which is essential to nurture a regenerative and ecologically healthy world that is truly sustainable for us all.

Framework: Responsibility. Accountability. Wisdom.

Bringing Nature On The Board is the first step towards practicing Nature-conscious Governance, which is at the intersection between Rights of Nature and the Voice of Nature - by promoting the creation of *de facto* stakeholder (standing and voting) rights for Nature on a board.

In order to practice Nature-conscious Governance, we rely on the Voice of Nature, via a human proxy, as a pathway to advance Nature's interests, agency and wisdom within anthropocentric systems. Based on the pillars of Responsibility, Accountability, and Wisdom (RAW), Nature-conscious governance goes beyond the control and compliance system of governance; and encompasses relationality, empowerment, alignment, and leadership to make Nature-informed decisions.

The role of the Nature proxy is therefore to guide, coach and facilitate the practice of Nature-conscious governance On The Board through response-able decision-making; accountable behavior; and wise council.

Work with us

The Process for Onboarding Nature

Onboarding Nature is a long-term commitment to journeying on the Nature-positive path.

There are four key dimensions that NGA has identified as essential in the process of ensuring meaningful impact, aligned behavior/action, and a transformative legacy : cultural, strategic, tactical and praxis dimensions.

Bringing Nature On The Board is a tactical move that can only be effective, meaningful and impactful when embedded within an integral strategic, cultural and practical planning framework.

Overleaf is an overview of the elements NGA has developed for the onboarding Nature journey.



ONBOARDING NATURE TIMELINE

INTEGRATION

Alignment Management

- Board guidance & coaching
- Nature-conscious Governance practice facilitation
- Nature proxy induction, training & support
- Accountability alignment



FOUNDATION

Voice of Nature Visionboard

- Chart the vision for VoN
- Identify the models
- Strategize next steps



LEGACY

Nature-conscious Governance

- Making wise decisions (Nature-conscious voting)
- Nature wisdom meshworking
- NCG continuous practice & accountability development



IMPLEMENTATION

Feasibility Study

- Legal, corporate and organizational review
- constitutional & structural accommodation
- Accountability framework
- Nature proxy selection



The Foundation element features as the first Nature-to-Business (N2B) program offered as a [Sodality](#).

Meet the team





Alexandra Pimor - Directive of Nature Governance

[Ally](#) leads the Nature Governance Agency as the vision holder for the frameworking, development, teaching and practice of Nature-conscious governance. She is responsible for global meshworking and collaborative partnership development. She also curates and delivers the Nature proxy co-development program (Dandelion Fellowship) and the onboarding Nature programs (Sodalities). Email: apimor@earthlaw.org

Pooja Sharma - Strategy & Operations Officer

[Pooja](#) co-leads the Strategy, Operations, and Planning on the Nature Governance team. She facilitates collaborative partnerships; develops inclusive legal tools, such as relational contracts; creates harmonious organizational practices; researches and co-develops content for Nature Governance. She is lead coordinator for the Dandelion Fellowship program, and curates the RCIL program (Relational Contracting & Integrative Lawyering). Pooja is responsible for systemic research & development initiatives. Email: psharma@earthlaw.org

Lucy Ward - Strategy & Operations Officer

[Lucy](#) co-leads the Strategy, Operations and Planning on the Nature Governance team. She co-designs and executes the implementation of Nature Governance principles and practices. She facilitates the visualization, creation and management of NGA initiatives; and is lead coordinator of the Wildflower programs (WF Collaborative Internship, and WF Meshwork Partnerships). She is responsible for developing Nature as water projects. Email: ward@earthlaw.org

Tony Zelle - Movement Builder Officer

[Tony](#) is an Earth lawyer and a catalyst. He leads NGA's movement building ambitions and meshworking efforts; and is responsible for the development of Earth Law education and legal practice development. Email: tzelle@earthlaw.org



Nature Governance Agency



Who we are



We are agents of the Voice.s of Nature

What we do



We bring Nature on board and empower leaders to make wise decisions for, with and as Nature

Why we do it



We are Nature. We choose to be a force for good through Nature-conscious responsibility, accountability and wisdom.


How we do it




We represent, facilitate and advocate for the agency of Nature as Stakeholder in private and public enterprise

Steps to work with us & with Nature



Become the change you seek to be in the world

Bring the voice, the vote and the way of Nature on your board

Practice what you preach with Nature-conscious integrity

Build a Nature-positive legacy for Planet, People, Purpose and Prosperity

Contact us

team@naturegovernance.org
www.naturegovernance.org