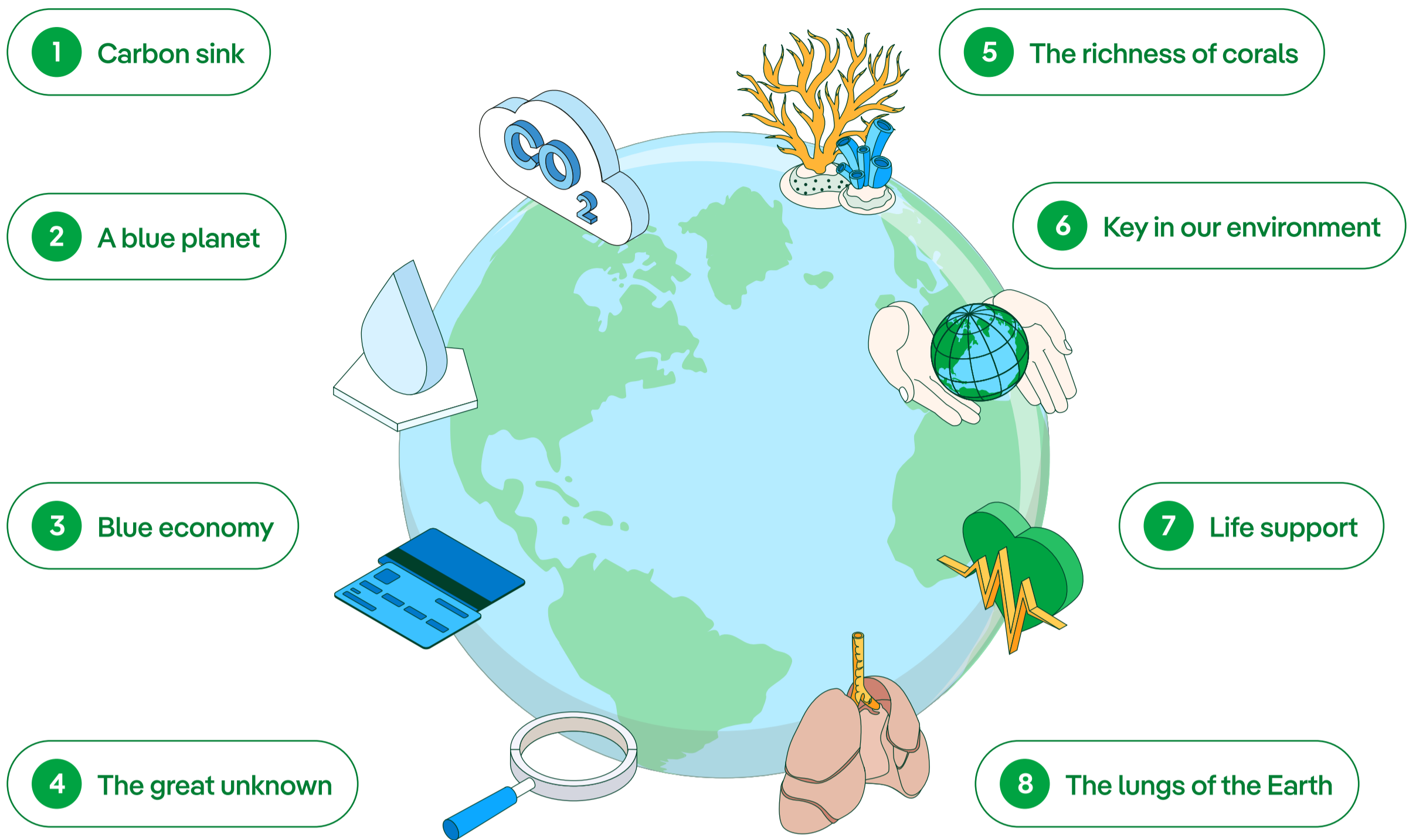


Marine biodiversity: a world to discover



1 Carbon sink

Oceans absorb **25% of carbon dioxide emissions** from the atmosphere. Habitats such as seagrass and mangrove forests can sequester up to four times more carbon dioxide than land forests.

2 A blue planet

More than **70% of the Earth's surface** is covered by water, and the oceans are home to about **97% of it**. Moreover, this element is always in continuous movement, transforming from one state to another thanks to what is known as the water cycle, which is essential for life on Earth.

3 Blue economy

In recent years, **respect for the economic development of the oceans** has become particularly important. This is known as the "blue economy", which the World Bank defines as the "sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health".

4 The great unknown

Less than 10% of the ocean has been explored by humans. Several scientific projects are focused on exploring the secrets that these large bodies of water still hold today: an estimated 245,000 sea species are known to us and more than a third of all marine species are still undiscovered.

5 The richness of corals

Covering **less than 0.1 per cent of the entire global ocean**, coral reefs support more than a quarter of marine biodiversity, protect coastlines and serve as sources of medicines.

6 Key in our environment

The majority of people on Earth lives less than **320 kilometres from the sea**, so saltwater bodies are a substantial part of the environment of many population centres. Their care has an impact on many people's quality of life.

7 Life support

More than **3 billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity** for their livelihoods as a major source of protein. In addition, marine fisheries directly or indirectly employ more than 200 million people.

8 The lungs of the Earth

The ocean generates between **50% and 85% of the oxygen we breathe**. The autotrophic micro-organisms - which make organic matter from inorganic substances - that inhabit the seas and oceans release that oxygen through photosynthesis.