



# Digest

DECEMBER 2022

Nature-based Solutions: **working together**

An update from NetworkNature  
and the NBS Cluster Task Forces



Network  
Nature

# NetworkNature Task Forces

Providing a space for dialogue and exchange  
for the nature-based solutions community



—  
The NetworkNature Team  
—

It's been a busy year for all of the nature-based solutions  
Cluster Task Force groups!



# It's not often we get to enjoy and reflect on our hard work. So, sit back, pour yourself a festive drink and enjoy the December edition of the NetworkNature Digest!

With a new metadata template and data management plan, Task Force 1 has laid the groundwork for better sharing of open data, case studies, datasets and more.

Task Force 2 has been busy promoting the essential handbook [Evaluating the Impact of Nature-Based Solutions](#) whilst simultaneously involving over 70 experts in producing a mini-handbook for biodiversity.

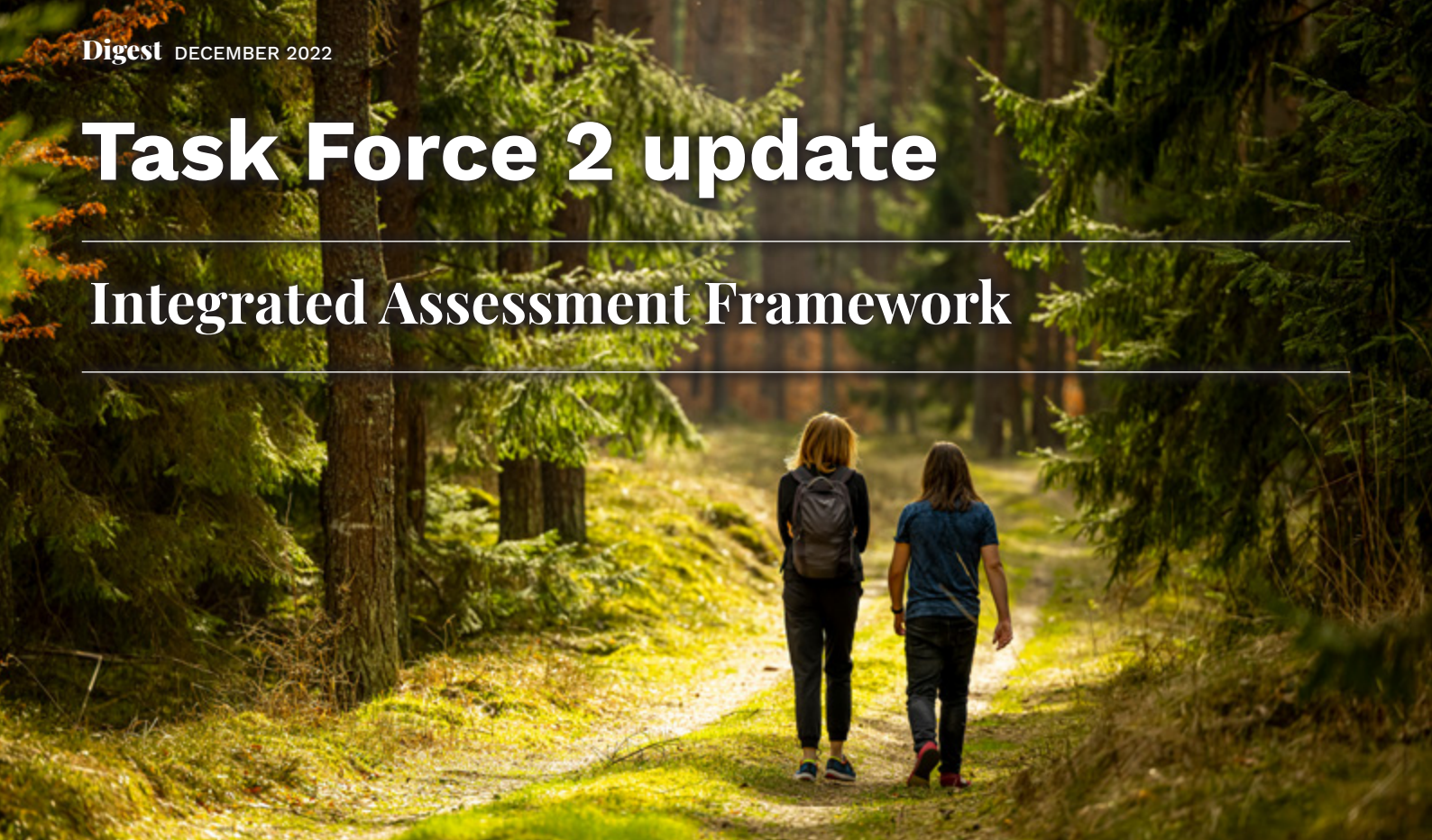
In April 2022, the European Commission Directorate-General for Research & Innovation released an independent expert report prepared by members of Task Force 3. [The vital role of nature-based solutions in a nature positive economy](#) has generated significant interest and Task Force 3 continues to promote the report, most recently at COP27 and with a [short promotional video](#).

The visibility of nature-based solutions continues to increase, thanks in part to the inventive work of Task Force 4. Exciting social media campaigns and the ongoing development of short, effective videos are helping nature-based solutions to reach new audiences.

Task Force 6 continue to develop co-creation and co-governance resources with an exciting European Commission report and decision support tool expected to launch in 2023.

# Task Force 2 update

## Integrated Assessment Framework



Task Force 2 (TF2) has been active in advocating for the monitoring of the NBS impacts across different societal challenges and most importantly with regards to Biodiversity. Therefore, the workstream on NBS & Biodiversity keeps moving forward in the expansion of the mini-Handbook on Biodiversity for which 72 experts across 31 EU Horizon projects are involved.

TF2 has been intensively advocating for and promoting the [“Evaluating the Impact of Nature-Based Solutions: A Handbook for Practitioners”](#) as a common framework. During this autumn, TF2 organized two major sessions:



**Veronica Ruiz Garcia**

IUCN

### 1. The Annual TF Cluster Meeting

During this meeting colleagues presented clear examples of the handbook’s application in evaluating NBS actions. These examples helped other practitioners to understand the challenges and barriers faced by other projects and how they used the Handbook as a coherent and integrated assessment framework based on common indicators.

### 2. COP27 EU Pavilion Programme

This second event offered the opportunity to emphasize the role of NBS and the importance of documenting their multiple benefits and engagement mechanisms when jointly tackling climate change, biodiversity loss and human needs.

# Focus on NBS at the COP27 summit in Egypt

## Co-creation of NBS for climate change adaptation session

**At the highly attended NBS TFVI session of the UNFCCC COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, a wide range of on-site and online speakers reflected on stakeholders and community engagement as crucial aspects in planning and implementing nature-based solutions (NBS) to shape common understanding of challenges, such as climate adaptation, and human and ecological well-being, by focusing on how co-creation of NBS could solve them.**

This panel discussion session showcased diverse experiences and perspectives, drawing on both lessons learned from EU funded research and innovation projects, as well as best practice cases from around the world on how to integrate and mainstream co-creation processes in strategic planning and urban regeneration.

Speakers and moderators of this session also discussed aspects related to sustainability in design and planning, well-being, soil degradation, social equity, and how co-creation can bridge the gaps and silos in policy-making frameworks related to NBS management in large

scale urban regeneration projects. This includes the development of online support tools to help guide people through the co-creation processes.

Contributing projects: URBiNAT, GO GREEN ROUTES, CLEVER Cities & PHUSICOS

**Find out more about the session:**

<https://app.swapcard.com/event/eu-side-events-cop27/planning/UGxhbm5pbmdfMTA1MjUwNw==>

**Rewatch the session video:**

<https://youtu.be/gdNXrzJXD4M>



—  
Isabel Ferreira  
URBiNAT  
—



# The vital role of Nature-based Solutions in a nature positive economy – New video



Task Force 3 has produced a short video to highlight the main recommendations of the EC Expert Publication [\*\*“The Vital Role of Nature-based Solutions in a Nature-Positive Economy”\*\*](#).

Watch the video and check out the report – a first step in addressing knowledge gaps in the potential economic benefits of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) and the challenges facing Nature Based Enterprises (NBE). Based on extensive consultations, the report profiles some of the economic activities where NBE are engaged in the delivery of NBS – generating new jobs and skills, innovations, and wider economic impacts through a nature-based approach that respects the needs of the environment and communities.

The report examines some of the key issues confronting stakeholders, including ‘greenwashing’. Such challenges are addressed head-on, informing recommendations on how to realise the transition to a nature-positive economy with NBS and NBE at the core. The report is aimed specifically at economic policy makers but is of high relevance for policy makers across multiple domains, public sector institutions and agencies, researchers, civil society and NGO representatives, investors and financial institutions, industry and NBE delivering NBS.

# Task Force 4 update

## NBS Communicators



—  
**Nea Pakarinen**

—  
ICLEI  
—

Task Force 4: NBS Communicators have been gathering every two months to discuss synergies for our communication efforts. This has included several joint social media campaigns with dedicated hashtags and visuals, typically initiated by one of the projects to raise awareness about NBS. Successful social media campaigns have included #Flowers4Bees, #Naturefact, #EdibleCitySolutions, #HugaTree and many more.

A major output has been three short videos on nature-based solutions. The first video, finalized in October 2022 was on co-creation and developed in collaboration with Task Force 6. Two more videos are currently in production: “What are NBS” & “What types of NBS are there?”.

**Watch the first video on how nature-based solutions are co-created at:**

<https://youtu.be/wWA2cx5y45c>



# Task Force 6 update

## Co-creation and Governance



—  
**Susanna Gionfra**

IUCN  
—

In Task Force 6 we are currently working on three different, but complementary, instruments:

### **Master document for co-creation and co-governance report**

TF6 has been working on a master document for co-creation and co-governance organised in 5 work streams, namely introduction & main concepts; understanding & mapping; co-governance approach; co-creation action and monitoring & evaluation. This document is now being updated to compose an EC report and an editorial team is currently working on the final structure and content of this document.





## Decision tool

A decision tool is being developed to target practitioners and decision makers that are considering the best ways to adopt or adapt governance strategies, to provide more adequate approaches to the co-creation of NBS. The tool will provide the users with different pathways forward, each with detailed tech notes. In the past months we also met with city staff members from the City of Brussels and the City of São Paulo to analyse and discuss how tools can more effectively respond to the target group's needs.

We have been in close collaboration with Oppla to develop the technological tool and more recently we have been discussing arrangements for financial cooperation among TF6 partners to produce the decision tool and the master document.

## Survey on NBS case studies

TF6 conducted a survey on the co-creation and co-governance of nature-based solutions projects funded by the H2020 program. The study included the collection and mapping of case studies and the development of a set of questions to understand the challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned from these projects. A total of 27 cases were considered valid for the explorative study.



TASK FORCE MEMBER PROFILE

# Mireia Batrons

Member of: **Task Force 2:  
Integrated Assessment  
Framework**



## What interests you most about the work of Task Force 2?

I'm interested in understanding how aquatic ecosystems, ponds and pondscapes (networks of ponds) in particular, can increase the resilience of ecosystems and society to climate change. This Task force allows me to share our results (e.g., from PONDERFUL project) to build and advance on NbS knowledge.

---

**Mireia Batrons**

*Associate Professor*

UVic | Universitat de Vic —  
Universitat Central de Catalunya


<https://www.uvic.cat>

## What nature-based solutions projects are you currently working on?

My organization is working with NbS through the [PONDERFUL project](#) (UVic-UCC: project coordinator). Within the PONDERFUL project, we are centred in the use of ponds as nature-based solutions (NBS) for climate change adaptation and mitigation. We are evaluating the interaction and feedback between biodiversity, ecosystem services and climate in pondscapes; and also developing future scenarios for pondscapes in the EU, Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), where we are conducting standardized tests. The findings of these tests will be used to develop a sustainable finance and investment guide for implementation of the proposed NBS and raise awareness among policymakers.

## Are there any upcoming events you're excited for?

Yes, the clustering meetings in CELAC in the coming year (dates TBC).



I'm interested in understanding how aquatic ecosystems, ponds and pondsapes (networks of ponds) in particular, can increase the resilience of ecosystems and society to climate change.

We are evaluating the interaction and feedback between biodiversity, ecosystem services and climate in pondsapes; and also developing future scenarios for pondsapes in the EU, Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)...

# Scaling up Wetlands Restoration in Europe: An Introduction to the WaterLANDS Project

As 2022 draws to a close, so too does the first year of the WaterLANDS project. Launched in December 2021, WaterLANDS (Water-based Solutions for Carbon-storage, People, and Wilderness) is an ambitious Horizon 2020 Green-Deal funded project that aims to restore wetlands across Europe and lay the foundations for upscaling protection across wider areas. Led by University College Dublin and bringing together 32 partners from 14 European countries, the project will undertake hands-on restoration of wetland sites and create best-practice models that can be applied to wetland restoration at other sites.

The key focus of the project is the restoration of wetland ecosystems, including peatlands, salt marshes and coastal estuaries. Healthy wetlands act as nature-based solutions that retain and purify water, store atmospheric carbon, moderate flooding and coastal storms, support an immense variety of wildlife, and offer recreational, well-being and economic benefits to surrounding communities. When mismanaged, these essential services for landscapes and society are lost. Scaling up the restoration of isolated wetlands can work towards re-establishing former wetland landscapes and realising new opportunities for local communities.

Adopting a holistic approach to restoration is central to the project's success. According to **Project Coordinator Dr. Craig Bullock,**

*“previous attempts at wetland restoration have often been too localised or fragmented to make a significant difference to the re-establishment of ecosystems and species. We aim to co-create more effective restoration which captures ecological, social, governance and financial aspects, to connect habitats and communities across Europe, ensuring both thrive for many generations to come.”*

WaterLANDS will utilise lessons learned from ongoing and existing restoration at 15 'Knowledge Sites' across Europe to inform hands-on restoration at six 'Action Sites': the Dragoman Marsh (Bulgaria), the Pärnu catchment (Estonia), Yorkshire iCASP (England), Cuilcagh-Anierin (Ireland), the Venice Lagoon (Italy), and the Ems-Dollard estuary (the Netherlands).

The project has had a hectic, but exciting, first year. As well as a rejuvenating first in-person meeting in May, key aspects of the project workflow have been established and advanced, including the identification of relevant ecological indicators for restoration, the completion of stakeholder mapping at the project restoration sites, the identification of the policy context at these sites, and an assessment of the sites' readiness for landscape-level restoration finance.

For restoration to have the greatest prospect of success, it is best undertaken within a landscape context. In light of this, WaterLANDS is one of four projects funded under the H2020 Green Deal Call 7.1: Restoring Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. The projects will together be providing scientific input to the design of the proposed EU Nature Restoration Law. The other Cluster projects are MERLIN, REST-COAST and SUPERB which are focused on rivers, the river-coastal interface, and forests, respectively. All four projects are directed at the upscaling of restoration and have an emphasis, but varying focus, on stakeholder engagement, governance and finance.

After a successful 2022, the WaterLANDS project is continuing to gather momentum, with plenty of exciting activities planned for 2023. As well as continuing to work with the Green Deal restoration cluster to advise on EU restoration policy, there will be lots of on-the-ground activities with opportunities for community members to get involved at restoration sites. Plans include the call for [artist residencies](#) which closes on January 13th 2023, and citizen science activities launching in 2023 at three of the project Action Sites.



**For more information on WaterLANDS and to stay up to date with the project, sign up to the [mailing list](#), check out the [project website](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).**

## Business and Nature Summit 2022:

# Corporates exchanging on nature-positive



---

**Siobhan McQuaid**

*Associate Director Innovation*

Centre for Social Innovation (CSI), Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin and Coordinator of the H2020 project Connecting Nature

---

**There was a high level of interaction at the Business Nature Summit. The best question came from the audience when [Gilles Doignon](#) from the [European Commission](#) revealing new [EIB](#) findings from a survey of 1300 NBS projects which show that 92% of nature-based solutions are still financed by the public sector. So what is needed to get more private sector investment?**



**Daniela Rizzi** from [ICLEI Europe](#) highlighted that this inequity in public-private financing was identified in a recent EC publication on ‘The vital role of nature-based solutions in the nature-positive economy’. She echoed calls for mandatory reporting on nature, not just for corporates but also for the public sector and argued strongly that we cannot forget about the small businesses that make up 99% of businesses in the EU. She stressed the importance of nature-based enterprises in job creation as part of a just transition to a nature positive economy.

**David Young** from the [Broadway Initiative](#) followed with recommendations from the ‘Financing Nature Recovery UK report (2022) on Scaling up High-

Integrity Markets for Nature’. In discussions, he stressed the critical role of wildlife trusts for the integrity of markets and argued that we cannot afford to make the same mistakes in biodiversity markets as in carbon markets where greenwashing led to retrofitting a governance framework. In response to questions, he suggested that the responsibility has to be with government to set up and manage such governance mechanisms.

**92%**  
of nature-based  
solutions are still  
financed by the  
public sector

---



In the concluding words of Daniela Rizzi, we need more events like this to accelerate action on nature-based solutions with businesses of all sizes.

**Sébastien Soleille** from [BNP Paribas](#) talked about the concrete actions they are taking such as asking their clients for full traceability of [biodiversity](#) impacts in their supply chain by 2025. Often the first response from clients is that they do not know where their raw materials are coming from. Some instruments they are using include Sustainability Linked Loan Principles (SLLP) and €4 billion in green bonds. They expect TNFD requirements will be a gamechanger for investors. As with many other speakers the importance of science based and transparent KPIs are needed to appease investor concerns.





Finally OwenBethell from [Nestlé](#) talked about the actions they're taking to have 50% of farmers in their supply chain switched to regenerative agriculture by 2030. He talked about the complementarity of [nature-based solutions](#) with climate change challenges for example, by integrating tree planting into agricultural systems the shade from trees can help to protect crops. In response to questions, he mentioned the importance of working with farmers, communities, and government to develop a rewarding economic mode for regenerative farming. Social, environmental, and economic issues need to be addressed together.

Thanks to [Chantal van Ham](#) from [Arcadis](#) for chairing the lively discussion which followed the captivating panel. In the concluding words of [Daniela Rizzi](#), we need more events like this to accelerate action on nature-based solutions with businesses of all sizes.

# Global Forum: Technology, Sustainability and Humanity in Muscat



—  
URBiNAT  
—



In October 2022, the work of Task Force 3 fed into **The Global Forum: Technology, Sustainability and Humanity** conference in Muscat, Oman.

While the Global Forum is an annual event, arranged in various cities around the world over the past 30 years, the 2022 edition represented the first occasion outside the OECD, and notably was held in the Middle East. This year's event was organised in collaboration with the platform *Water and Humanity*, established with the support of URBINAT, among other organisations, in 2019.





A striking feature of the event was the broad spectrum of competences and experiences that came together, featuring a highly diverse geographical blend, as well as spanning from decision makers and experts across a broad industrial spectrum, from the private as well as public sector, to civil society representatives. This combined with a remarkably open atmosphere, where candid recognition of outstanding issues went together with intensive solution searching and engagement in concrete implementation processes.

The sharing of smart digital applications and behavioural methodologies went hand in hand with recognition of inaction. In light of outstanding issues, there was a call for new initiatives, such as those to power the energy transition and improve water management; engage citizens in participatory processes and realise improved governance and policies in support of more healthy and sustainable communities. As a result, a set of recommendations and guidelines for taking account of ethical aspects in the application of artificial intelligence policy was presented.



The rapid shift towards renewable energy sources was examined in-depth, along with the intensified search for reduced carbon emissions. Opportunities were identified regarding the rapidly increased attention to sustainability in financial markets and investment decisions, accompanied with strong messages to counter greenwashing and ensuring further action to realise improved conditions for supporting natural capital. The dire situation in less developed countries, with regards to the state of their societies, global societies, difficult conditions in the job market as well as within entrepreneurship, requires new attention in the context of cross-border collaboration.

**200 experts, thought leaders, business representatives and decision makers from all over the world exchanged ideas and advanced concrete solutions to realise untapped opportunities in support of sustainability.**

---

Breakout sessions advanced novel approaches to innovation in education and new concepts of access to culture and heritage, for example through interactive technology applications, museums and tools for participatory community development. A round-table highlighted ways forward to achieve a more dynamic interface between industry and universities. Finally, special workshops facilitated preparations for the implementation of specific nature-based solutions, in urban development, by way of mangroves and wetlands for revitalising deprived coastlines.

The progress achieved, along with an agenda for follow-up action, will be integrated in a forthcoming action document, “the Muscat Call, 2022”.

# MERLIN

## MERLIN Innovation Awards 2023

As part of the Merlin Innovation Awards 2023, MERLIN seeks new and widely applicable solutions for restoring or enabling financial benefit for freshwater ecosystems. If your innovative product or solution is market-ready, you are eligible to apply in one of the two categories:

- **Product of the year 2023**
- **Service of the year 2023**

### Benefits

- There is a unique opportunity to pitch your product/service to [17 European freshwater restoration project managers](#) and many other decision makers and stakeholders
- Chance to be part of the systemic transformative change of our society and economy
- Recognition within the European freshwater ecosystem community with your product/service featured on the widely read [Freshwater Blog](#)
- Automatic inclusion in the [MERLIN Marketplace](#) if your application is accepted for the MERLIN Innovation Awards 2023.

### When will the MERLIN Innovation Award take place?

The selected companies will be invited to present their innovative freshwater product/service in a 3-minute presentation with additional 2 minutes of Q&A on the Demo Day. The Demo Day will take place online in January 2023 (date to be announced). The winners will be awarded in an online ceremony on a date to be announced in February 2023.

**Applications deadline: 22nd December 2022**

**To find out more and apply visit:**

<https://project-merlin.eu/events-news/mia.html>



# Panel discussing Nature-positive Economy in the EU Pavilion of COP27



—  
**Siobhan McQuaid**

*Associate Director Innovation*

Centre for Social Innovation (CSI),  
Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin

—

European Commission side event at the  
**EU Pavilion of COP27, 9 September**

Task Force 3 organised a European Commission Side Event at COP27. The event was packed, with a strong audience on-site at the EU pavilion in the convention centre of COP27, as well as online from all around the world.

The event was opened by moderator Prof. Thomas Andersson, representing Task Force 3, the Horizon 2020 project URBiNAT, and as a co-author of the recent expert report [The Vital Role of Nature-based Solutions in a Nature-Positive Economy](#). In his initial remarks, Prof. Thomas Andersson pointed to crucial challenges facing our world due to systematic under-investment in sustaining the benefits

of Nature. While mobilising support for nature-based solutions (NbS) stands out as increasingly critical, capturing their benefits requires realising innovative business models, the rise of viable nature-based enterprises (NBEs) and that the financial sector is energised for greatly enhanced and more relevant investment.

While no single-handedly uniform recipe is at hand, the session pulled together the lessons of intensive experimentation and learning processes across cities in Europe and elsewhere, made possible by Task Force 3. Working out a way forward, with a just transition to a nature positive economy, enabling further diffusion and enhanced relevance on the ground, in cities around the world, will require further deepened and expanded genuine collaboration; with joint efforts cross-borders.



Throughout the session, constructive efforts were made to demonstrate business cases for nature-based solutions which have been proven viable, while candidly exposing outstanding issues and barriers. Some of the highlights include:

**Marc Watum,**  
*Entrepreneurial empowerment specialist*

A moving address by the South African entrepreneur Marc Watum, the founder of the pan-African 2030 initiative, calling attention to the complex and contradictory state of our world. He underlined the importance of unlocking our mindset and recognising the age-old knowledge of local communities as part of a way forward to harness the value of nature, instead of undermining and depleting it.

**Wenting Chen,**  
*Norwegian Institute for Water Research*

Wenting Chen elaborated the spectrum of benefits arising from NbS, while noting that some can be monetised and internalised, while others cannot. On this basis, she called for further development of methods of value-accounting and their embedding in institutional frameworks on terms that can help realise greater investment and support of key, endangered resources.

**Malik Boukebbous,**  
*DEME-Group*

Speaking on behalf of an established corporation, DEME, one of the world's largest dredging companies that know how to engineer ocean and coast-land projects, Malik Boukebbous presented an informative and fascinating exposé of the many bits and pieces that need to match with genuine engagement by relevant stakeholders, aggregated, and coordinated, to realise large-scale NbS projects. He pointed to the rapid evolution in financial markets as offering critical means of enabling greater progress.

**Mónica A. Altamirano de Jong, PhD**  
*de Jong, PhD, WaterEquity*

Mónica A. Altamirano de Jong similarly pointed to a range of successful projects as well as readily available untapped opportunities to achieve more. She demonstrated that lack of progress is not primarily due to lack of funding but lack of capacity to put forward bankable projects. She called for a rethinking on collective action approaches to public-private partnership.



**Chloe Treger,***TreesAI & Dark Matter Labs*

Chloe Treger used the example of an ongoing pilot in #Glasgow to show how platforms can play an important role in connecting local partners and projects with financing. She underlined the importance of innovation in making use of new technologies to overcome coordination problems and achieve better matching between project opportunities and providers of funding and other resources.

**Fabio Maria Montagnino,***The Cyprus Institute*

From The Cyprus Institute, outlined the problematic situation across much of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East in the face of high risks from climate-related challenges. Fabio Maria Montagnino made a compelling case for the need to overcome current fragmentation in communication and approaches through the establishment of candid, constructive collaboration on where it matters most. He ended with a thought-provoking reflection on how nature is on the line, calling for our enhanced efforts for us all to face up to the distorted choices and pressures which currently cause the downfall of nature at the altar of economic development.

The session ended with a series of questions from the audience and a brief debate which, among other things, inquired about the kinds of benefits emanating from NbS, and how they may or may not materialise. The panellists concluded with brief remarks on what they viewed as most important for turning the tide and achieving better progress ahead. The answers included both a call for improved and more enabling policies, and an emphasis on the need for intensified and expanded piloting, experimentation and learning bottom-up, as we can no longer wait for governments. Thomas Andersson expressed hope that the session could inspire enhanced collaboration to identify ways forward, and by thanking the speakers and all who had taken part and made the session possible.



# NetworkNature Taskforces Cluster Meeting

The fourth NetworkNature Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) Task Forces Cluster Meeting took place in Brussels on the 28th September, for the first time in person. It provided the opportunity for projects, partners and the European Commission to interact, creating a space for networking and collaborations, which are essential objectives of NetworkNature. Facilitating science and policy exchanges is essential for assuring the integration of NBS into policy. With an ever-increasing number of NBS projects, NetworkNature plays a crucial role in bringing them together to work towards creating synergies and common tools.

Overall, the meeting, and the exchanges it triggered, stressed the importance to upscale NetworkNature's agenda through knowledge sharing and communication, not only between partners but also across the projects and Task Forces, and the wider NBS community that NetworkNature gathers. Read the full report.



The full report can be downloaded [here](#)



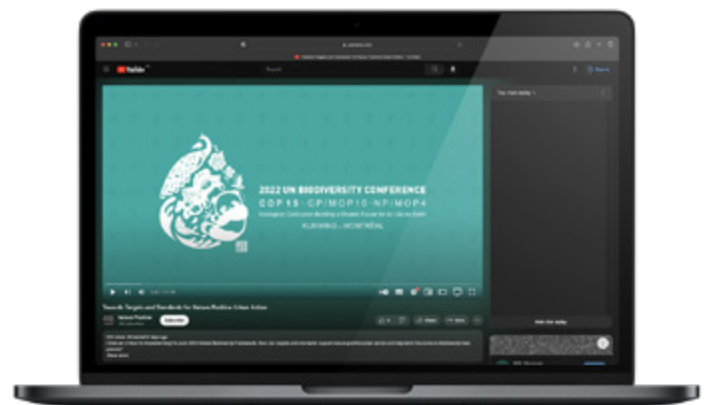
# UN Biodiversity Conference — COP 15

Task Force 3 shared the recommendations on standards and their role from the independent expert report on the nature-positive economy at the Nature-Positive Pavilion at CBD COP15 in December 2022.

This session took stock of the advantages and limitations of standards as a means to support action both within and beyond urban boundaries. The session was organised by the Naturvation coordinator Harriet Bulkeley from Durham University.

**Watch the session online at:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKSu17gJ01Y>





# Network Nature

 [networknature.eu](https://networknature.eu)

 [NetworkNatureEU](https://twitter.com/NetworkNatureEU)

 [NetworkNature](https://www.youtube.com/NetworkNature)

 [NetworkNature](https://www.linkedin.com/company/NetworkNature)

The sole responsibility for any error or omissions lies with the editor. The content does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Commission. The European Commission is also not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 887396.

