



# NetworkNature

## Report

**NbS Task Forces Cluster Meeting**

WP1

IUCN

March 2026

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## Executive summary

Nature-based Solutions are central to Europe's response to the triple planetary crisis, and the NetworkNature community plays an active role in turning this ambition into practice. The Task Force Cluster Meeting of 19 March 2026 brought together 68 participants from all six NbS Task Forces, NN NbS Hubs, and the European Commission to take stock of progress and strengthen collaboration across the network.

The meeting opened with a welcome from the European Commission, underlining the strategic importance of NbS and the value of knowledge exchange across projects, Task Forces, and Hubs.

Task Force updates demonstrated concrete progress across all six areas. TF1 completed a hackathon on metadata templates for NbS indicators, now moving to the piloting phase, and advanced work on AI ethics and guidance. TF2 is synthesising evidence on NbS effectiveness across four active workstreams, with a mini handbook on biodiversity indicators entering review. TF3 successfully disseminated the "Policy Imperatives for a Resilient Nature-Positive Economy" publication and launched a Pitch&Match webinar series. TF4 is developing a communications toolkit and NbS lexicon in collaboration across Task Forces. TF5 launched an open call for NbS educational resources. TF6 advanced work on spatial planning linked to the Nature Restoration Law and multispecies co-creation governance.

NN Labs presented practical outputs including journalist training, citizen science tools, and decision support systems. Five new Horizon Europe projects joining NetworkNature were introduced, focusing on climate adaptation, urban resilience, and ecosystem management.

The meeting also covered the NetworkNature Research and Innovation Roadmap, the NN Policy Packages supporting policymakers, responsible use of artificial intelligence in NbS research and innovation, and updates on the EN 18140 terminology standard and the IUCN Global Standard for NbS.

The next in-person TF Cluster Meeting will be held in Paris in November 2026.

# Introduction

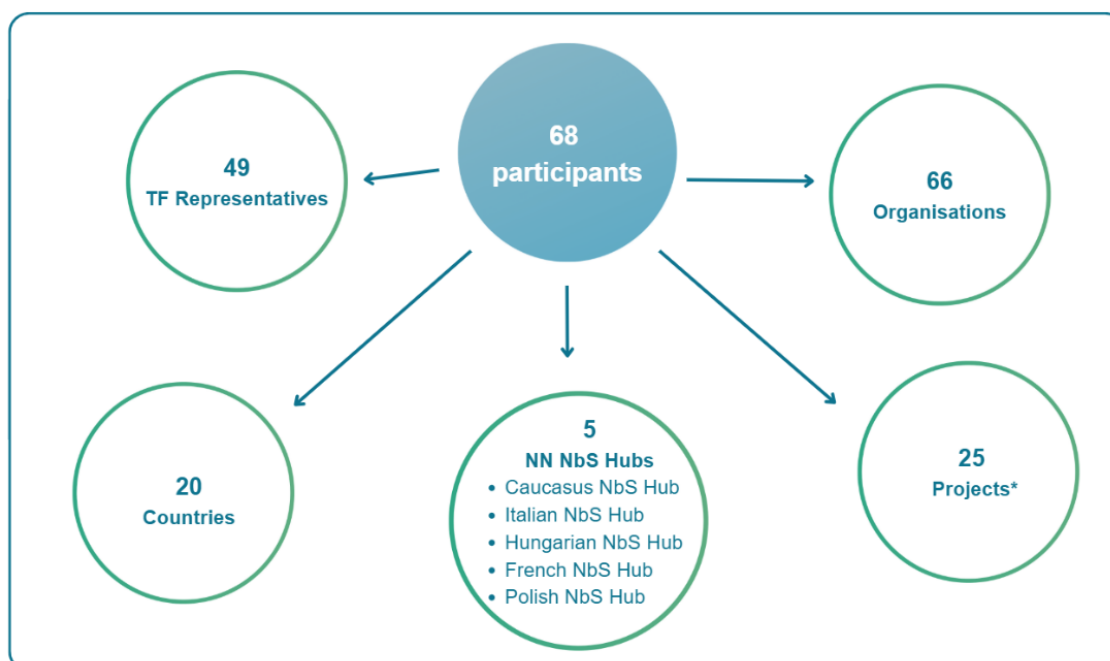
## Structure, overview and participation

The **NetworkNature Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Task Forces Cluster Meeting** was held online on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2026 and brought together NetworkNature (NN) Task Force (TF) members, NN NbS Hubs representatives, and the European Commission (European Research Executive Agency and DG Research & Innovation).

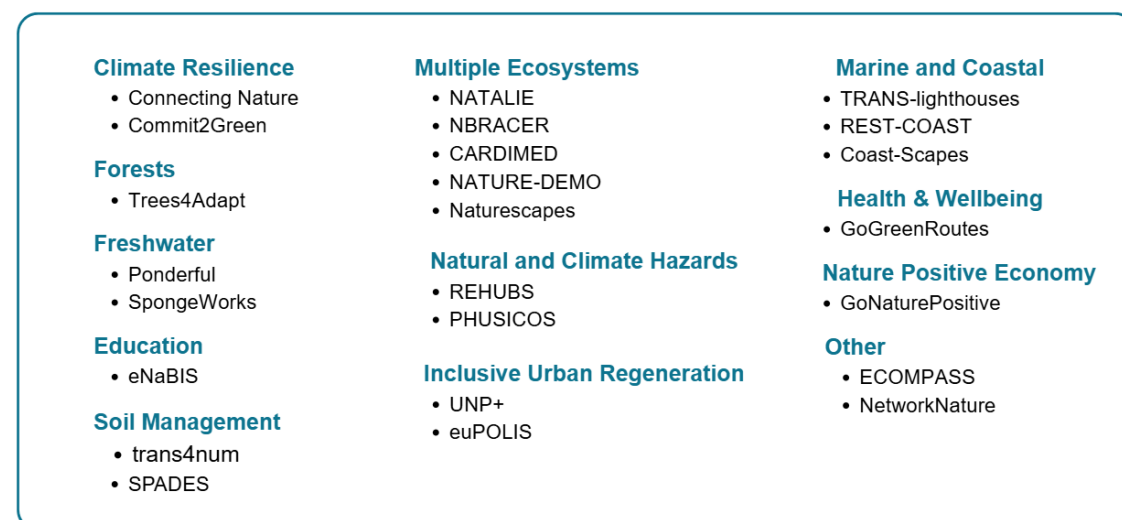
Building on the last in-person TF meeting held in September 2025, the meeting aimed to discuss cross-Task Force collaboration, provide updates on the work of the NN Labs, and share news and progress on the NbS standardisation process in Europe. The meeting also offered an opportunity to explore and exchange on the impacts of Artificial Intelligence on Research and Innovation.

The agenda of the meeting is provided in Annex 1. All slides presented during the meeting are available through [this link](#).

A total of 68 participants attended the meeting, including members of all six NbS Task Forces (57 representatives in total), NN NbS Hub representatives, and the European Commission. Participants came from 22 countries, with the largest representations from Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Spain, and were affiliated with 24 NN projects and 66 organisations. Five NN Hubs were represented.



The following 24 projects\* were represented in the meeting, spanning various ecosystems and sectors:



# Opening Session

## Welcome Speech and Introduction

Piret Noukas, DG RTD, European Commission | Zuzana Lukacova

Piret Noukas (DG RTD, European Commission) and Zuzana Lukacova (IUCN EURO) opened the meeting with a welcome to all participants. Piret Noukas highlighted the achievements of the NbS community at both European and NetworkNature level and underscored the continued importance of NbS in addressing the triple planetary crisis. She set the scene for the meeting by emphasising the value of collaboration and knowledge exchange across projects, Task Forces, and Hubs. Building on this, Zuzana Lukacova introduced the structure of NetworkNature for newer participants, including the aims of the various Task Forces and the NN Labs that operate across them.

# NbS Task Forces Updates

## Key updates from the NbS Task Forces on achievements and upcoming activities

The TF representatives shared key outcomes of the last months, as well as upcoming activities or milestones with the participants, helping to identify possibilities for cooperation and giving visibility to the TFs. These insights are captured in the table below.

Task Force	Key Achievements	Future Objectives
<p><b>TF1: Data and Knowledge Sharing</b></p> <p>Paul Mahony, Oppla</p>	<p>Building on previous work, a hackathon focused on developing metadata templates for NbS indicators, which will be completed in Q3 2026 and will then move to the piloting phase. The challenge areas “new economic opportunities” were developed in collaboration with TF3, and “participatory planning and governance” with TF6. Furthermore, the TF is working on AI by trying to understand how NbS projects are using AI, by sharing experiences and best practices and exploring ethical and environmental considerations.</p>	<p>Pilot projects will apply the finalised metadata templates<sup>1</sup>. Work on AI will continue, including the development of accessible guidance on ethical and environmental considerations for NbS projects.</p>
<p><b>TF2: Integrated Assessment Framework</b></p> <p>Louis Durrant, IEEP</p>	<p>TF2 is synthesising evidence on NbS effectiveness to support better policy- and decision-making. Four workstreams are active: Development of a mini handbook on biodiversity indicators (in review); improving usability and synergy of NbS indicators through the AIMNbS project; consolidating evidence for the integrated assessment framework; and guidance on NbS in spatial planning.</p>	<p>Publication of AIMNbS project results, a draft mini handbook on biodiversity indicators, and a draft Meta Repository collection from the Miro Board linking to the integrated assessment framework. Collaboration with NBS4EU TF2 is also planned.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Projects interested in testing the metadata templates are invited to contact the TF via email, TF1@networknature.eu

<p><b>TF3: Finance and Business Models (for NbS) in a Nature-Positive Economy</b></p> <p>Lukas Weindl, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum</p>	<p>The publication “<a href="#">Policy Imperatives for a Resilient Nature-Positive Economy</a>” was disseminated and well taken up. A Pitch&amp;Match webinar series was launched, and the TF was present at key business events including EBNS, EEN and the Finance and Innovation Festival. Participation in the Horizon Europe WP 2026-27 was advanced.</p>	<p>Continuation of the Pitch&amp;Match webinar series (upcoming in April), collaboration on Horizon Europe WP 2026-27 and joint events like the Green Week and the NbS International Congress 2026. Collaboration with MIP4Adapt is planned on financing climate action. Work on an NbS Investment Community is ongoing and the Implementation of the NN Lap on insurance (CMCC) is planned.</p>
<p><b>TF4: NbS Communicators</b></p> <p>Giulia de Fusco, ICLEI Europe</p>	<p>Development of a communications toolkit, building on existing resources.</p>	<p>Selecting the top 10–15 key terms to define collaboratively across NbS Task Forces, publishing a second call, and integrating outputs into the full communications toolkit by end of 2026. Network members are invited to vote <a href="#">here</a> on terms and suggest communication materials for inclusion in the relevant <a href="#">form</a>.</p>
<p><b>TF5: NbS Education</b></p> <p>Bart Kapteijns, ICA   Avans University of Applied Science</p>	<p>Launch of a call for contributions for an Open Educational Resource (OER) on NbS, inviting openly licensed teaching and learning materials from across disciplines and educational settings (schools, universities, NGOs, practitioners, citizen science initiatives).</p>	<p>Collection of contributions until the end of May 2026 (formats such as lecture slides, case studies, videos and interactive tools), under this <a href="#">link</a>.</p>

<p><b>TF6: Co-Creation and Governance</b></p> <p>Zuzana Lukacova, IUCN</p>	<p>Abstract of book (TransformERS) chapter on voiceless participation and multispecies co-creation was accepted. A spatial planning study was undertaken examining how high-level environmental policy obligations can be translated into locally meaningful planning and governance practices, with a focus on the Nature Restoration Law, Urban Nature Plans, and NbS living labs. TF6 contributed to a MIP4Adapt event on enabling conditions for NbS (26 March) contributed with TF1's work on indicators from a co-creation perspective.</p>	<p>Contribution to a MIP4Adapt webinar with facilitated breakout sessions on co-creation, multi-actor engagement, and governance. Expanding the scope of co-creation with a focus on multispecies aspects, and continued work on spatial planning and its link to the Nature Restoration Law. Further testing of the online co-creation Decision Support System (DSS) and exploration of participation in the NbS Paris Congress in November.</p>
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## Introduction to the NN Labs Ideas

[NN Labs](#) are structured as four-step open calls designed to promote and support the development of concrete outputs, such as tools, guidelines, publications, and other initiatives, related to NbS within the NbS TFs. These outputs are eligible for financial support through the NN Task Forces Operational Fund, which totals €112,000 and is allocated. While some of the selected NN Labs have already concluded their work, others are continuing and progressing with their implementation.

In the table below, the seven NN Labs ideas are presented.

NN Lab idea	Leader
<b>Idea #1 – NbS 101 for Hungarian Journalists</b> <b>Building Skills to recognize NbS and tell their stories</b>	<b>Mónika Németh</b>   BURST   TF6
<b>Idea #2 – From Planning to Action</b> A Summer school on Urban NbS for Professionals and Academics	<b>Gregorio Sgrigna</b>   CNR-IRET   TF1, TF2
<b>Idea #3 - AIM-NBS</b> Advancing Impact Measurement of Nature-Based Solutions	<b>Marcel Cardinali</b>   TH OWL   TF 2
<b>Idea #4 - Co-creating NbS in the context of informal settlements</b> Joint lessons with a case in the Global South	<b>Gerd Lupp, Beatriz Caitana de Silva</b>   TUM   TF6
<b>Idea #5 - EcoField Tracker</b> A Citizen Science app for freshwater health monitoring	<b>Carlos Garcia de Léaniz</b>   Swansea University & Blue Rivers Foundation   TF1
<b>Idea #6 - The Co-Creation, Co-Governance Decision Support System (DSS)</b>	<b>Sean Bradley</b>   Groundwork London   TF6
<b>Idea #7 - The NbS Fresco</b> An Educational and Awareness-Raising Tool	<b>Natalia Brack, Giulia Bussoletti</b>   IID-SII   TF4

## **Adapting NbS 101 for Journalists: The Hungarian Experience**

Mónika Németh, BURST, TF6 | Phyllis Posy, Posy Global, TF4 & TF5

This initiative aimed to strengthen the capacity of journalists to identify and communicate stories related to NbS, while supporting broader outreach beyond the NbS expert community. Building on the *Design Guide for NbS 101 for Journalists* developed through the NbSEduWorld project, the initiative explored how the guide could be implemented in practice through one of the NN NbS Hubs.

The Hungarian Hub adapted the guide to the national context and developed a targeted capacity-building programme for journalists. As part of this process, a NbS masterclass for journalists was organised. The programme involved the establishment of a co-design team composed of NbS professionals and journalists, who collaboratively shaped the training content and approach. The masterclass included workshops as well as site visits to local NbS projects, enabling participants to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world examples.

The initiative resulted in strong media engagement and the development of a Nature Press Kit providing journalists with case studies, glossaries, background information, and contact points. The final consolidated output is the NbS 101 Press Orientation Kit, a practical toolkit designed to support NbS Hubs and other intermediaries in engaging journalists and building their capacity to report on NbS. The toolkit is currently in its final editing stage and is expected to be adaptable for use in other national and regional contexts.

## **From Planning to Action - A Summer School on Urban NbS for Professionals and Academics**

Gregorio Sgrigna, CNR IRET, TF1 and TF2

The NbS School aims to build capacity among professionals and academics involved in the planning and implementation of NbS. The inaugural edition took place in Milan during the first week of July 2025, organised as a side event to a national NbS event and in collaboration with the Politecnico di Milano. It brought together over 40 participants and more than 15 expert speakers from both academic and practitioner communities.

The three-day programme combined field visits, lectures, and collaborative discussions. Participants visited several NbS projects in Milan and surrounding areas, including initiatives addressing urban flooding, district regeneration, and ecological restoration through urban forestry. The programme also hosted a session from another NN Lab led by Sean Bradley (Groundwork London), which tested the Co-Creation and Co-Governance Decision Support System (DSS) as a tool to support improved planning and governance of NbS.

### **AIM-NbS: Advancing Impact Measurement of Nature-based Solutions**

Marcel Cardinali, TH OWL, TF 2 | Stuart Connop, UEL | Chiara Baldacchini, Uni Tuscia | Carolina Cantergiani, Tecnalìa | Agnieszka Oszweska-Guizzo, NeuroLandscape

The AIM-NbS initiative aims to systematically gather insights from EU-funded projects to identify bottlenecks, challenges, and successes related to the impact evaluation of NbS. The process was initiated during a workshop at the previous TF Cluster Meeting, where participants co-created survey questions to collect evidence from NbS projects.

The survey has recently closed, gathering 55 responses from 51 unique NbS projects across different ecosystem types, including terrestrial, human-modified, aquatic, and marine environments. Most responses referred to projects operating at local and site scales, and represented initiatives at different stages, from initialised to completed projects.

Preliminary results highlighted several key factors for successful impact evaluation. Stakeholder and policy alignment emerged as the most important factor (75%), followed by interdisciplinary collaboration (58%) and the availability of dedicated expert staff (47%). Factors such as having a developed theory of change or access to high-tech equipment for data acquisition were considered less critical by respondents.

The project has now entered the analysis phase. The team will continue analysing the dataset and plans to publish the main findings in an open-access paper and a policy brief by the second quarter of 2026. Intermediate results will also be shared with the TF 2 community during upcoming meetings.

## **Co-creating NbS in the context of informal settlements: Joint lessons with a case in the Global South**

Gerd Lupp and Beatriz Caitana de Silva, TUM, TF6

This initiative focuses on urban regeneration and the co-creation of NbS in informal settlements, using a case study in Brazil to facilitate cross-learning and exchange among TF. Building on the kick-off discussion at the previous in-person NN meeting, the initiative has established a core group involving members from across the TF to support the development of the lab activities.

Using a [Participatory Action Research](#) (PAR) approach, the project works closely with local partners and communities. Initial steps have included the creation of a local committee involving institutions and practitioners, the establishment of partnerships with local associations, and the engagement of students and researchers to support workshops and field activities. Social mobilisation activities have also begun, including meetings with residents and exploratory mapping of social and urban challenges through observations and community interactions.

The next phase of the initiative will focus on community engagement and co-design activities aimed at addressing local environmental challenges, such as flooding risks and environmental degradation linked to construction waste. Planned activities include community meetings, co-design workshops, and a local workshop to consolidate the process and identify potential NbS interventions together with the community.

## **EcoField Tracker: A Citizen Science app for freshwater health monitoring**

Carlos Garcia de Leaniz, Adela Baratech Sanchez, Gilles Segura | Swansea University & Blue Rivers Foundation

The [EcoField Tracker](#), presented at the meeting by Adela Baratech Sanchez, is a citizen science mobile app designed to enable the public to monitor the health of freshwater ecosystems. The concept is to create a platform similar to “TripAdvisor” allowing citizens to observe and assess rivers, wetlands, and other freshwater habitats through simple data collection.

The app will enable users to upload geolocated photos, record environmental features and stressors, and answer short questions related to ecosystem condition, biodiversity, and recreational value. These observations will contribute to an overall assessment of freshwater health, helping raise awareness while supporting better management of freshwater environments. A pilot example currently under development focuses on tracking river waste, enabling users to document pollution and assess environmental conditions at specific locations.

To support the development of the application, the team conducted a stakeholder survey exploring which types of data would be most valuable and which factors are most important for a successful citizen science app. Preliminary results highlighted river condition and biodiversity observations as the most valuable types of information, while user experience, scientific contribution, and transparency were identified as key success factors. The pilot version of EcoField Tracker is currently being tested within a LIFE project in Bulgaria, with further development planned following the completion of the survey.

## **The Co-creation, Co-governance Decision Support System**

Sean Bradley, Groundwork London, TF6

The initiative focuses on the development of a [Decision Support System](#) (DSS) designed to guide users through structured pathways for co-creation and co-governance in NbS. The tool was initially developed with support from several Urban Living Lab projects, originally within the CLEVER Cities project, and has since been further developed, continuing through content improvements, technical enhancements, and testing with selected partners.

Current work includes expanding the database of case studies and tools, refining the platform structure, and improving the user interface, including a map-based navigation system. Technical development is also exploring AI-enhanced search and Q&A capabilities. Final user testing and feedback collection are planned ahead of the platform's launch, after which the DSS will be disseminated and applied through partner organisations at both grassroots and municipal levels.

## NbS Fresco: An Educational and Awareness-Raising Tool

Natalia Brack, Giulia Bussoletti, IID-SII, TF4

The NbS Fresco is an interactive, collaborative educational workshop designed to raise awareness about NbS and their benefits. Participants work in groups using a set of visual cards (see picture below) representing NbS, impacts, hazards, and benefits, which are arranged collaboratively on a visual canvas to foster discussion, systems thinking, and shared learning.



A pilot workshop session with TF members (nine participants from four TF) was conducted to test the methodology. Feedback from this session led to several refinements, including simplifying the game mechanics, reducing and rebalancing the number of cards, introducing interactive landscape boards (urban, rural, and marine/coastal), and adjusting group sizes. The workshop currently focuses on urban NbS in the test round, although the methodology can be applied across multiple landscapes.

The project is now entering its final development phase, including the preparation of an NbS Fresco catalogue and facilitator guidelines, as well as internal testing and training. The tool will be piloted with external audiences in 2026, including citizen engagement workshops within the NBRACER project and potentially a session at the NN Annual Event.

# Welcoming new NbS projects

NN is onboarding 11 new Horizon Europe and EU Mission projects in 2026, which will be introduced to NbS TFs through dedicated onboarding sessions organised by IUCN. These sessions will help to familiarise projects with the NN community and facilitate collaboration with TFs and other initiatives. Five of the new projects were briefly presented during the meeting.

## Trees4Adapt

Michael Pashkevich, Katharina Albrich, Natural Resources Institute Finland

Trees4Adapt is a Horizon Europe project (2025–2029) involving 12 partners across 10 countries. The project aims to advance understanding of the interactions between climate change and biodiversity loss, while exploring the potential of tree-based NbS to address these challenges and avoid maladaptation. The project combines field research and modelling activities and adopts a strong stakeholder-centred approach to ensure that results are co-created with end users and relevant for societal needs.

## JUSTSAFE

Maria Gkotzia, Municipality of Aigaleo

JUSTSAFE focuses on advancing just climate resilience in urban environments, ensuring that adaptation strategies are equitable and inclusive. The project addresses the needs of vulnerable groups such as low-income populations, elderly citizens, and people with disabilities. Through a combination of communication tools, social interventions, and capacity-building activities, the project aims to test solutions in real-life environments across several European demonstrator sites.

## SYSTR

Thanasis Sfetsos, National Center for Scientific Research “Demokritos”

SYSTR aims to accelerate systemic climate adaptation by combining NbS with socio-economic interventions, governance innovation, and climate risk modelling. The project develops integrated ecosystems of resilience solutions supported by tools such as an adaptation support tool for climate risk modelling,

regional adaptation boards for stakeholder co-creation, and an upscaling toolbox to support replication across Europe. Demonstration and Replication sites include coastal (Guadeloupe, Galicia), rural (Banksa Bystrica, Strasbourg), and urban (Rome, Aigaleo) contexts.

## **COAST-SCAPES**

Manel Grifoll, Polytechnic University of Catalonia

COAST-SCAPES focuses on developing and transferring climate-resilient solutions for coastal areas, highlighting co-benefits across socioeconomic sectors, geographical domains (land to sea), and time scales. The project uses a pilot triad system that connects sites across different continents to support replication and scalability of resilience plans inspired in NbS.

## **REHUBS**

Dimitra Perperidou, DREVEN

REHUBS aims to strengthen climate resilience in regional communities through NbS combined with digital tools tailored to local contexts. The project focuses on key challenges including water management, wildfire mitigation, and resilient agriculture. It will test solutions such as circular water recovery systems, biodiversity monitoring, and community-based adaptation approaches, while supporting capacity building through training and digital platforms.

# **Introducing the IUCN European NbS Hub**

Natalia Burgos Cuevas, IUCN

Natalia Burgos (IUCN) presented to the NN members the newly launched IUCN European NbS Hub, established with support from the German Government. The Hub forms part of IUCN's global NbS strategy and aims to bring IUCN's expertise closer to European projects and policy, supporting the delivery of inclusive, equitable, and measurable benefits.

The Hub's activities focus on four complementary areas: mapping and guiding NbS initiatives, connecting European and global communities of practice, sharing knowledge and tools, and enabling action through finance, partnerships, and policy support. It also provides technical guidance on the IUCN NbS Standard, supporting both local implementation and national policy uptake.

Since its launch, the Hub has been co-creating its vision with partners and identifying opportunities for collaboration. Early engagement activities include for example training on the NbS Standard conducted in partnership with NN. The Hub aims to strengthen the European NbS community, improve standard uptake across sectors, and foster credible, high-integrity NbS implementation.

NN projects are encouraged to engage with the Hub by contacting Natalia Burgos Cuevas via email [[Natalia.burgos@iucn.org](mailto:Natalia.burgos@iucn.org)], to explore synergies, co-develop activities, and contribute to the promotion of NbS integrity across Europe.

## Implementation of the Roadmap for R&I and cross-TF opportunities

### Implementation for R&I on NbS – Presentation and update on implementation

Mila Bétemps, Biodiversa+

Mila Bétemps presented the European NbS [Research & Innovation \(R&I\) Roadmap](#), developed in 2023 to support coordination and impact across EU research, policy, and practice. The roadmap responds to the rapidly evolving NbS landscape, where multiple projects, initiatives, and actors operate across fragmented knowledge and limited coordination. It aims to take stock of EU R&I efforts, identify knowledge and implementation gaps, and provide a common vision for advancing NbS in Europe.

The roadmap is structured around four action areas:

- **Advancing NbS knowledge and data:** Improving evidence on NbS effectiveness and developing methodologies to assess benefits and costs.
- **Closing the research–implementation gap:** Integrating research and demonstration, operationalising NbS in business contexts, and developing practical tools.
- **Mainstreaming NbS in policy:** Supporting policy implementation across EU sectors, enabling legal and institutional frameworks, and contributing to international NbS agendas.
- **Exchange, capacity building, and awareness:** Raising societal awareness, promoting transdisciplinary dialogue, and building skills and investment capacities for NbS.

The roadmap is designed to support multiple stakeholders: projects can track contributions to EU-wide R&I efforts, TFs can monitor the impact of their activities, and the broader NbS community can identify emerging needs and collaboration opportunities. Funders and policymakers can use the roadmap to monitor progress, detect knowledge gaps, and inform future priorities.

TFs are already contributing to the roadmap's implementation. For example, TF2's mini-handbook on biodiversity indicators aligns with evidence-building and business integration, while TF4's NbS lexicon supports knowledge advancement and societal awareness.

The process to contribute to the roadmap is straightforward: TFs can categorise activities into the four action areas using a simple [bi-annual Excel sheet](#), while projects can tag outputs (publications, reports, workshops) with designated keywords on the NN website. These inputs will be linked to the roadmap visual online, helping to highlight knowledge gaps, track progress, and inform the 2030 roadmap update.

[The roadmap](#) and related resources are publicly available. Contributors are encouraged to reach out for further engagement and to explore opportunities to connect their work to the EU-wide NbS R&I effort.

## Ideas and opportunities for collaboration between different TFs based on the R&I Roadmap

Evelyn Underwood, IEEP

Following the presentation of the R&I Roadmap, this session explored ways to strengthen collaboration between TFs to support the implementation of the EU NbS R&I Roadmap. The aim is to organise interactive exchanges, foster joint activities, and leverage synergies between TFs, ensuring that work within individual groups contributes to broader EU research and innovation priorities.

Key planned mechanisms for collaboration include dedicated meetings and tasks leading up to November 2026 in-person meeting, interactive sessions at the TF Cluster Meeting in Paris, and contributions to forthcoming NbS policy packages. A [Miro board](#) has been set up to capture ideas and track potential collaborations across TFs.

Initial ideas for cross-TF collaboration included:

- **TF1–TF2:** Developing improved indicator factsheets and metadata templates, building on AIM-NbS project findings to enhance usability.
- **TF1–TF2–TF3:** Collaboration on financial indicators, including metadata templates and indicator fact sheets.
- **TF1–TF2–TF6:** Development of co-governance indicators and related metadata templates.
- **TF4–other TFs:** Contributions to the NbS lexicon to enrich terminology and definitions.
- **TF5–other TFs:** Expansion of the Open Educational Resource database, particularly for higher education, and development of project information templates.

The discussion highlighted the value of both structured and ad hoc interactions, including the potential for individual TF members to circulate between TFs to facilitate knowledge exchange and ensure consistent reporting. Task leads are encouraged to track these links and update mailing lists to maintain visibility of cross-TF connections.

TF members were invited to provide inputs on priorities and collaborative ideas via the Miro board, as well as to identify topics for dedicated sessions at the in-

person cluster meeting in November. Contributions will help maximise the collective impact of TFs, strengthen knowledge sharing, and support the implementation and monitoring of the EU NbS R&I Roadmap.

## Presenting the NN Policy packages

Louis Durrant, IEEP

The NN Policy Packages are tailored collections of resources and guidance designed to support policymakers in integrating NbS into their work. They consolidate outputs from multiple sources, including NN project deliverables, TF outputs, NbS research projects, and other publicly available resources. These include regulatory, planning, financial, informational, and cooperative instruments, providing a comprehensive toolkit for policy design and implementation.

The Policy Packages are organised within the “Policy Package Database”, which currently captures over 350 resources. Each resource is categorised using keywords that indicates the relevant NN theme, operational scale, and stage of the policy cycle. This allows policy makers to filter and access resources according to their needs, such as agenda setting, implementation, or evaluation. The first theme to be tested for usefulness and functionality, Zero Pollution, will be ready in May 2026, serving as a template for other themes.

TFs and projects can contribute to the development and refinement of these packages in two ways:

- **Testing the packages:** TF Members are invited to engage with the Zero Pollution template to ensure the filtering and tagging system delivers relevant resources effectively.
- **Submitting additional resources:** Any project outputs, case studies, or guidance relevant to NbS policymaking can be added to the database to strengthen the packages. All new contributions will be checked against the existing database to avoid duplication and ensure completeness.

Policy Packages will also be presented and reviewed during the in-person TF Cluster Meeting in Paris in November 2026. Following this, the packages will undergo a period of review and refinement before the final versions are released. Beyond their immediate utility for policy makers, the packages provide an opportunity for projects and TFs to increase the visibility and uptake of their outputs, and to actively contribute to Europe-wide NbS policy support.

## Impacts of artificial intelligence (AI) on research and innovation and way forward

Paul Mahony, Oppla

This presentation focused on how artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping research and innovation, particularly in the environmental and NbS sector.

AI encompasses several approaches, including machine learning for pattern recognition and predictive modelling (e.g., Spotify or Netflix recommendations), deep learning for images, audio, and spatial data (e.g., Google Photos, Alexa), natural language processing for analysing text and policy documents (e.g., ChatGPT), and rule-based/expert systems for automated decision support (e.g., IBM Operations Decision Manager). These tools are increasingly being used to augment data extraction, analysis, and interpretation.

In practice, AI is supporting researchers by accelerating data collection and processing, pattern detection, predictive modelling, and report summarisation. Examples highlighted include: using machine learning to plan urban green spaces and reduce heat, applying AI to summarize environmental legislation, leveraging expert systems for site-specific restoration planning, and using deep learning for automated plant species identification from drone and satellite imagery. These applications enable faster, more informed decisions while allowing researchers to focus on interpretation, critical thinking, and stakeholder engagement.

The presentation also addressed challenges associated with AI, including data quality and bias, lack of transparency, ethical concerns, technical capacity, regulatory compliance, and environmental impact. Responsible adoption was emphasized, including piloting AI tools, ensuring high-quality data, maintaining transparency, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration between ecologists, data scientists, and policymakers.

## Aligning NbS Work through Standardisation

### An update on NbS standardisation in Europe

Daniela Rizzi, ICLEI | Andrea Mora, UNI

The meeting also included updates on ongoing efforts to standardize NbS across Europe. The presentations highlighted the role of NN in connecting the NbS research and innovation community with European standardisation processes, emphasising the need for shared frameworks to support collaboration across sectors.

The EN 18140:2026 standard “Sustainable and Smart Cities and Communities – Nature-based Solutions: Terminology and Classification” was presented as a key development addressing the long-standing lack of shared definitions and clarity in communication. The standard aligns with widely used definitions and frameworks (e.g. UNEA-5.2 resolution on NbS, the IUCN Global Standard, the EU Green Deal). Its scope includes core NbS definitions, related terms, specific solution types (e.g., green roofs, artificial reefs), management practices, and classification frameworks by societal challenge, intervention type, spatial scale, and stakeholder involvement.

Andrea Mora (UNI, Italy) explained that EN 18140 was developed through a consensus-building process under CEN Technical Committee (TC) 465, Working Group 01 on NbS, with NN contributing expertise from funded projects. The standard provides a shared vocabulary to support policy, planning, procurement, monitoring, and market development for NbS. Translation into national languages, including Italian, is underway to facilitate adoption at the national level.

In addition, the [CEN Workshop Agreement](#) (CWA) 18349:2026 “Guidance on performance and design criteria for nature-based insurance and investments”, led by the NATURANCE project, was highlighted as a pre-standard offering guidance on performance and design criteria for nature-based insurance and investments. CWAs allow faster flexible processes and may be upgraded to European or ISO standards over time. The discussion emphasized how ecosystem insurance mechanisms and financial instruments can support NbS implementation, linking measurable risk reduction to financial value while ensuring equity, regulatory compliance, and social co-benefits.

Overall, the session underscored that standardized terminology, classifications, and guidance documents are critical for aligning NbS research, policy, and practice across Europe and globally.

## **The updated IUCN NbS Standard and application in practice**

Leon Muedner, IUCN

Finally, IUCN provided an update on the IUCN Global Standard for NbS and its recent revisions. The Global Standard serves as a framework for designing, verifying, and scaling NbS, ensuring quality outcomes for both people and nature, while reducing the risk of greenwashing. It consists of 8 criteria and 27 indicators covering environmental, social, and economic dimensions, and is intended for use by a broad range of stakeholders.

Key updates in the latest version include:

- Adoption of a systems-thinking approach, integrating multiple dimensions rather than using a simple checklist.
- Greater clarity, usability, and practical applicability in diverse contexts.
- Stronger emphasis on equity, rights, and safeguards, including the active involvement of Indigenous peoples and local communities across all criteria.
- Enhanced focus on financial feasibility, long-term viability, and enabling conditions for scaling.

Alignment with recent international frameworks, including the UNEA-5.2 resolution and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as increased responsiveness to policy and investor needs.

Practical application tools have been updated to facilitate assessment and implementation, allowing users to evaluate NbS initiatives efficiently. The standard is complemented by a [report of 21 case studies](#) demonstrating real-world application, accessible via the IUCN NbS website.

## Concluding remarks and next steps

Zuzana Lukacova, IUCN EURO

The first 2026 TF Cluster online meeting concluded with thanks to all participants for their engagement throughout the day. The programme offered a series of dynamic presentations, covering updates from the TFs, NN Labs, standardisation initiatives, policy packages, AI applications, and the R&I Roadmap.

The meeting highlighted the ongoing work and collaboration across TFs, showcasing cross-TF engagement. Five new Horizon Europe projects were introduced, with onboarding and opportunities for collaboration laid out during the meeting. Participants were encouraged to continue contributing ideas and insights to strengthen both ongoing and emerging initiatives.

Key takeaways included the importance of cross-Task Force dialogue and strengthening connections with NbS Hubs. Sessions also showcased ongoing NN Labs initiatives and explored long-term strategies, particularly around financing, stakeholder engagement, and NbS standardisation.

Slides and the meeting report will be shared with participants, and attention is now turning to the next in person TF Cluster meeting in **November 2026 in Paris**, where discussions and collaborative work will continue.

# Annex 1: Agenda

09h30		–		10h40	
Welcome and introduction					
09h30 09h35	Welcome Speech	Piret Noukas, European Commission			
09h35 09h40	Introduction to NetworkNature and to NbS Task Forces	Zuzanna Lukacova, IUCN			
09h40 09h55	Short updates from the NbS Task Forces	NbS TFs Representatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TF1 - Paul Mahony</li> <li>• TF2 - Louis Durrant</li> <li>• TF3 - Lukas Weindl</li> <li>• TF4 - Kassia Rudd</li> <li>• TF5 – Ann-Catrin Fender</li> <li>• TF6 – Zuzana Lukacova</li> </ul>			
09h55 10h20	Quick updates on the NN Labs ideas	Ideas leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mónika Németh, BURST   TF6</li> <li>• Gregorio Sgrigna, CNR-IRET   TF1, TF2</li> <li>• Marcel Cardinali, TH OWL   TF 2</li> <li>• Gerd Lupp, TUM, TF6</li> <li>• Carlos Garcia de Leániz, Swansea University &amp; Blue Rivers Foundation   TF1</li> <li>• Sean Bradley, Groundwork London   TF6</li> <li>• Natalia BRACK, IID-SII   TF4</li> </ul>			
10h20 - 10h30		Welcoming new NbS projects			
10h20 10h30	Trees4Adapt, JUSTSAFE, SYSTR, COAST – SCAPES, REHUBS	Michael Pashkevich & Katharina Albrich; Maria Gkotzia; Thanasis Sfetsos; Manel Grifoll; Dimitra Perperidou			
10h30 - 10h40		Introducing the European NbS Hub			
10h30 10h35	Introducing the European NbS Hub	Natalia Burgos Cuevas, IUCN			
10h35 10h40	Q&A	Moderated by IUCN			
10h40		–		11h10	
Roadmap for R&I on NbS and cross-TF collaboration					

<p><i>First part of this block will provide an update on the Roadmap for R&amp;I implementation (Introduction   R&amp;I Roadmap) and concrete ideas and opportunities for collaboration between different TFs. After the break, the second session will present the plans for NetworkNature policy packages and other guidance.</i></p>		
<b>10h40 11h10</b>	<b>Implementation of the Roadmap for R&amp;I and cross-TF opportunities</b>	
10h40 10h50	Roadmap for R&I on NbS – Presentation and update on implementation	Mila Betemps, Biodiversa
10h50 11h00	Ideas and opportunities for collaboration between different TFs based on the R&I Roadmap	Evelyn Underwood, IEEP
11h00 11h10	Q&A	Moderated by IUCN
<b>11h10 11h20</b>	<b>Short break</b>	
<b>11h20 11h45</b>	<b>Presentation on the NN policy packages</b>	
11h20 11h35	The NetworkNature policy packages – What is happening and how can the Task Forces contribute?	Louis Durrant, IEEP
11h35 11h45	Q&A	Moderated by IUCN
<b>11h45 12h00</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
<b>12h00 12h25</b>	<b>Impacts of artificial intelligence (AI) on research and innovation and way forward</b>	
12h00 12h15	Taking Stock of AI: uses, challenges and opportunities across NbS Task Forces	Paul Mahony, Oppla
12h15 12h25	Q&A and Mentimeter	Paul Mahony, Oppla
<b>12h25 12h30</b>	<b>Short Break</b>	
<b>12h30 – 12h55 Standardisation</b>		
<b>12h30 12h50</b>	<b>Standardisation updates</b>	
12h30 12h40	NbS standardisation in Europe, an update	Daniela Rizzi, ICLEI
12h40 12h45	IUCN Updated NbS Standard and application in practice	Leon Muedner, IUCN
12h45 12h55	Q&A	Moderated by IUCN
<b>12h55-13h00 Concluding remarks</b>		
12h55 13h00	Concluding remarks and next steps	Zuzana Lukacova, IUCN



NetworkNature is an expanding ‘network of networks’ working together to raise awareness, share knowledge and build capacity about nature-based solutions to accelerate their uptake in business, science, policy and practice along the policy priorities of the European Green Deal. It will maintain and add to a diverse and science-based repository of evidence on NbS, strengthen partnerships and foster new relationships around a clear, strategic framework for action. This work is underpinned by an up-to-date EU Research & Innovation NBS Roadmap and NetworkNature’s six priority themes: Biodiversity enhancement and ecosystem restoration; Sustainable food systems; Zero Pollution; Climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience; Sustainable finance, investment and just transition; Sustainable urban and regional transformation.



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