

Choose nature.



**Unlocking pathways
to a resilient economy
for people and the planet.**

NetworkNature Annual Event 2025 | Agenda



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“Transformative change is urgent because there is a closing window of opportunity to avoid further biodiversity loss and prevent triggering the potentially irreversible decline and projected collapse of key ecosystem functions. Delaying action to achieve global sustainability is costly compared with the benefits of taking action now”

This statement opens the summary for policymakers of the **IPBES Assessment report on Transformative Change**, warning us about the risks of failing to address biodiversity loss with the urgency the situation demands.

At the same time, current EU political priorities aim to foster competitiveness to ensure that European businesses can thrive in the global marketplace. This, coupled with a fast-changing geopolitical context, signals a shift in focus — from ambitious environmental targets to a stronger emphasis on economic growth.

This divergent context invites us to reflect on the opportunities and challenges of addressing these questions together. Organised by NetworkNature in collaboration with Brussels Environment, this year’s NetworkNature Annual Event 2025 “Choose Nature” will **explore different means to align biodiversity and economy in times of urgency, building on the concept of Nature-based Solutions**.

We will hear from a broad range of stakeholders, from the public and private sectors, examine diverse ideas, exchange knowledge, explore initiatives and share case studies that link nature with climate, economy, innovation, finance and business and wellbeing. Through pitches and discussions, we will delve into pathways to build a resilient economy that benefits both people and nature. The event will also encourage stakeholders to engage with and adopt these approaches.

The event will be structured around four thematic sessions:

Choose to Work with and for nature

This session will explore how supporting and enhancing nature can help build a more resilient economy. Additionally, it will discuss how simplification can enhance environmental ambition.

Choose to Trust nature and people

This session will delve into the concept of dependency, highlighting nature’s ability to provide both essential ecosystem services, and solutions to complex problems. It will present Nature-based Solutions as innovative approaches — grounded in diverse knowledges and shaped with local communities — to current challenges.

Choose to Invest in nature

Focusing on innovative finance mechanisms, this session will explore and discuss the many reasons that public and private organisations should invest in nature, and how to sustainably scale up financial flows that support a nature positive economy.

Choose to Partner with nature

In the closing session, a range of businesses working with nature will share key insights from their business models, highlighting opportunities, barriers, needs and strategies for nature-positive business practices.

In parallel to the main event, the **exhibition Why Choose Nature? / Why do we care?** will invite you and your organisation to explore the diverse (and divergent) reasons why working with nature is essential and why you should care about it.

Curated through an open call, this exhibition will compile a variety of resources, experiences and types of knowledges, all highlighting how nature-based approaches can encourage and build on a wide range of perspectives in relation to nature. This concept is inspired by the **IPBES Values Assessment** report on integrating diverse values of nature into decision-making and aims to contribute to a meaningful exchange during the event. This open call has been developed by **NetworkNature in collaboration with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences SLU (Florence Damiens) and count on the support of Brussels Environment**.

Finally, during the event, NetworkNature will officially launch the **NbS Business Forum** and offer a space to showcase diverse nature-based business models. The NbS Business Forum aims to bring together corporates, SMEs, nature-based enterprises, and financial actors in a collaborative space to accelerate the market uptake and scaling of NbS. This space has been curated via **Businesses that choose nature** Open Call.

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Relevant information

When?

Tuesday, 16th of September 2025

Registration opens at 08h30

The event runs from 09h00 to 16h45.

The launch of the NbS Business forum will take place from 16h45 to 17h30.

After the event, drinks will be served at Parckfarm (a 9-minute walk from the venue) until 19h00.

Where?

Bruxelles Environnement building

Near Tour & Taxis

Avenue du port 86C / 3000

Havenlaan 86C/3000

1000 Brussel

[Link to Google Maps](#)

[“How to get there” Map](#)

Lunch and coffee breaks

Coffee/tea breaks, and lunch will be provided.

Lunch and coffee breaks will be served by Groot Eiland and will be vegetarian, with vegan options, organic, local and seasonal. There will be an adapted lunch for those who informed about it on the registration form.

Know more about [Groot Eiland](#).

Pictures and videos

Please note that pictures will be taken during the event. We might use these pictures in future reports.

Dress code

No specific dress code is required for the event.

We encourage you to take a raincoat, [this is Brussels!](#)

Not registered yet?

[Registrations available here.](#)

Agenda

Registration

08h30 09h00	Registration
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Introduction

09h05 09h15	Welcome keynote speech	Charles Karangwa, IUCN
09h15 09h30	Introduction to the event	Faridah Ibrahim IUCN

Choose to Work for and with nature.

Nature as the foundation for resilience and wellbeing.

Nature plays a vital and multifaceted role in supporting human health, climate stability, water and food security, and protection against natural disasters. These interconnected benefits form the backbone of a thriving, resilient economy and society. However, economic strategies often overlook our dependencies on biodiversity and undervalue its contributions, viewing nature primarily as a source of raw materials. By shifting toward a more holistic understanding of nature as a key partner in long-term resilience and wellbeing, we can avoid costly disruptions, safeguard ecosystem functions, and unlock sustainable opportunities for both industries and communities.

Nature-based solutions offer long-lasting, cost-saving and adaptive solutions to existing challenges by recognising the diverse values of nature. Leveraging the power of nature can ensure a resilient economy that benefits both people and nature.

09h30 6 Short presentations 10h20 Choose to Work with and for nature

<i>It is urgent, vital for the health of the planet and humanity</i>	Sebastian Villasante IPBES Transformative Change Assessment Report
<i>To coexist with the living</i>	Nathalie Le Meur Ville de Grenoble
<i>To tackle the systemic causes of nature loss</i>	Siobhan McQuaid Trinity College Dublin representing NbS Task Force 3 Finance and Business Models
<i>Don't repeat the same mistake</i>	Edoardo Carlucci International Institute for Sus- tainable Development (IISD)
<i>It is needed and feasible</i>	José María Rey Benayas Universidad de Alcalá de Henares
<i>To reverse historical and ongoing injustices</i>	Sander Jacobs Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek (INBO)

10h20 Short panel + Q&A 10h45 Beyond simplification

	Sebastian Villasante IPBES Transformative Change Assessment Report
	Nathalie Le Meur Ville de Grenoble
	Edoardo Carlucci International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
	José María Rey Benayas Universidad de Alcalá de Henares
Guest panelist	Elsa Coslado Brussels Environment, Brussels-Capital Region

10h45 11h10 Coffee break

Choose to Trust nature and people .

Recognising social and economic dependencies on nature.

As Europe sets out a path to long-term prosperity through high-tech innovation, there's a growing understanding that sustainable success depends on aligning technological progress with ecological and social wellbeing. Embracing an integrated approach —one that values both nature and people— can lead to more resilient and inclusive outcomes. Nature-based solutions (NbS) offer a powerful, innovative response to today's complex challenges.

By blending high- and low-tech innovation with Indigenous and local knowledge, as well as insights from ecological and social sciences, **NbS create holistic, adaptable solutions that strengthen biodiversity, enhance water and food security, improve human health, and promote climate and social equity. This session aims to trigger a wider recognition of the capacity of people and nature together to tackle current challenges.**

11h10 6 Short presentations 12h00 Choose to Trust nature and people

We depend on it

Lisa Biber-Freudenberger
IPBES Nexus Assessment Report

Water needs nature from source to sea

Joachim Maes
**DG ENV
European Commission**

People have solutions!

Cédric Sounard
**Assemblée Citoyenne pour le
Climat | Brussels-Capital Region**

A good life for all

Sonja Gantolier
**JUST Nature | Hochschule
Weihenstephan-Triesdorf**

Nature is our future

Sue Miller
STOP Ecocide Now

*We cannot stop the tide - but we can
open the door, and let nature lead.*

Vona Méléder
REWRITE | Nantes Université

12h20 Short panel + Q&A 12h25 Recognising dependencies

Lisa Biber-Freudenberger
IPBES Nexus Assessment Report

Joachim Maes
DG ENV | European Commission

Sue Miller
STOP Ecocide Now

Vona Méléder
REWRITE | Nantes Université

Guest Christian Holtzleitner
panelist **DG CLIMA | European Commission**

12h25 Menti session 12h30

Choose to Invest in nature.

Financing change through existing and new opportunities

NbS play an essential role in tackling multiple challenges, including climate change, pollution and the vital need to transition to a nature positive economy. However, there remains a huge gap between the funding currently available for NbS and the amount that is required to meet EU and global goals. Investing in nature provides a range of opportunities to increase resilience of operations, supply chains and landscapes while delivering multiple benefits. Done well, and with robust safeguards, investing in nature can reduce risks, contribute to a fairer society and help respond to regulatory requirements. By fully integrating the value of these benefits in decision making, their full investment potential becomes clear. The challenge is to develop 'bankable' NbS, and to ensure the policy, regulation and insurance measures are in place to scale implementation up and out.

This session explores the reasons to make new investments in nature, to shift existing investments away from activities that harm nature and towards NbS, why safeguards are so important to make sure that social and environmental rights are advanced and protected and that investments result in multiple benefits.

12h30 6 Short presentations 13h20 Choose to Invest in nature

<i>It is a strategic asset for Europe 's resilience and competitiveness</i>	Hadrien Michel DG ENV European Commission
<i>The value of nature relies in its time-tested power to arrive at effective local solutions</i>	Mark Van Nieuwstadt BIOFIN-EU Naturalis Biodiversity Center
<i>To enhance the insurance value of nature and transition towards a nature-positive economy</i>	Marianne Zandersen Invest4Nature GoNaturePositive! Aarhus Universitet
<i>It is central to responsible investment</i>	Natacha Boric Finance for Biodiversity Foundation
<i>Is lack of private investment the real issue preventing us from addressing the biodiversity crisis?</i>	Frédéric Hache Green Finance Observatory
<i>To rethink health and wellbeing</i>	Étienne Aulotte Brussels Environment, Brussels-Capital Region

13h30 Short panel + Q&A 13h45 Changing finances

Hadrien Michel DG ENV European Commission
Marianne Zandersen Invest4Nature GoNaturePositive! Aarhus Universitet
Natacha Boric Finance for Biodiversity
Frédéric Hache Green Finance Observatory
Guest panelist Theresa Pleye GLS Bank Global Alliance for Banking on Values

13h45 Lunch break 15h10

Choose to Partner with nature.

Creating new businesses with and for nature

Achieving meaningful and lasting transformative change requires placing nature at the heart of all business models and decision-making processes, both in those who are actively managing nature and in those who can transform their supply chains. There is an urgent need to both transform existing industries and companies and create and scale-up SMEs working in harmony with biodiversity. By doing so we can promote the creation of skilled and high-quality jobs, while ensuring social equity and sustainability.

Nature-based solutions have a great potential to drive this change. By prioritising ecological restoration, conservation, protection and sustainable management of terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems, these solutions foster cross sector and interdisciplinary collaboration. They can also mobilise diverse financing streams, ranging from public investment to private capital – accelerating innovation and impactful action for both people and planet.

15h10 6 Short presentations 16h00 Choose to Partner with nature

<i>There is no business without nature</i>	Sharon Brooks UNEP - WCMC
<i>It is the right moment</i>	Barbora Chmelova Czech Ministry of the Environment
<i>Work with what you love!</i>	Isobel Fletcher GoNaturePositive! Horizon Nua
<i>For climate resilient solutions that benefit business and society</i>	Esther Carmen MERLIN The James Hutton Institute
<i>Nature is the solution</i>	Beeodiversity Michaël van Cutsem
<i>To change the way we do businesses</i>	<i>Speaker Tbc</i>

16h00 Short panel + Q&A 16h25 Businesses for nature and people

	Sharon Brooks UNEP - WCMC
	Barbora Chmelova Czech Ministry of the Environment
	Esther Carmen MERLIN The James Hutton Institute
	<i>Speaker Tbc</i>
Guest panelist	Egbert Roozen European Landscape Contractors Association

NbS Bussiness Forum

During this final break, we will host informal and interactive showcase of SMEs, Nature-based Enterprises, start-ups, and organisations working on or with the business side of Nature-based Solutions.

The NbS Business Forum envisions building a thriving business ecosystem where NbS is a mainstream strategic and operational approach, empowering businesses to deliver for people and nature.

Final words

16h25 16h30	Closing words by the moderator	Faridah Ibrahim IUCN
16h30 16h40	Final words	Humberto Delgado Rosa, DG ENV, European Commission

Launch of the NbS Bussiness Forum

16h40 17h20	Coffee break and NbS Bussiness Forum
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Outdoor drinks

17h30 19h00	Parckfarm
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**UK Research
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