

European Union Nature-based Solutions Profile



European
Union

Climate & Geography

The European Union spans a vast and varied landscape—from the Arctic edges of the northern regions to the Mediterranean coasts, and from the Atlantic to Eastern Europe and outermost regions. It includes a diverse geography from alpine peaks and lowland plains to major rivers like the Danube and the Rhine.

The geographic diversity of the European Union brings a broad climate range: mild, rainy oceanic weather in the west; hot, dry Mediterranean summers in the south; and harsher continental and boreal conditions in the east and north.

Policies incorporating NbS

The EU has included NbS in legal, policy and planning frameworks concerning climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation — both in documentation submitted under the Rio Conventions and in institutional arrangements and governance at the EU level. An overview of EU funded resources in NbS can be found [here](#).

Submitted under the Rio Conventions

European Union Nationally Determined Contribution, 2020 Update ([UNFCCC, 2020](#))

First submitted as an Intended NDC on 6 March 2015, and subsequently became the European Union's first NDC (updated twice: 2020 & 2023). The NDC of the group of EU Member States does not include specific strategies and policies; however, the 2020 updated NDC specifically highlights that "nature-based solutions play an important role to solve global challenges such as biodiversity loss and ecosystems degradation, poverty, hunger, health, water scarcity and drought, gender inequality, disaster risk reduction and climate change."

European Union Submission to CBD Notification 2025-005 ([CBD, 2025](#))

In their submission, the EU and its 27 Member States recognized that enhanced policy coherence can be pursued by leveraging the potential of NbS and their multiple benefits as a contribution to achieving the goals, objectives and targets of the CBD and the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, as well as UNCCD and the Land Degradation Neutrality targets and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals and targets.

Key Union Policies

EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (2020)

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030—a cornerstone of the European Green Deal—commits to growing protected areas to 30% of land and sea, planting 3 billion trees, and legally mandating restoration of 30% of degraded ecosystems by 2030. Explicit NbS measures include forest restoration, river rewilding, wetland recovery, and soil health restoration, all designed to co-deliver climate benefits, biodiversity recovery, and enhanced ecosystem services.

European Green Deal (2019)

Approved in late 2019, the European Green Deal sets the EU on a path to climate neutrality by 2050. It integrates NbS across its components—circular economy, building renovation, biodiversity, agriculture, and adaptation—emphasising nature-based measures as fundamental to sustainable development.

Nature Restoration Regulation (2024)

This landmark regulation legally requires Member States to restore at least 30% of habitats in poor condition by 2030 (scaling to 90% by 2050), focusing on peatlands, wetlands, grasslands, and coastal ecosystems. It mandates national restoration plans by 2026, embedding NbS within ecosystem recovery obligations. Furthermore, it requires Member States to integrate adaptation in all policy areas and promote ecosystem-based adaptation and NbS.

EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change (2021)

The Strategy promotes NbS as central to building climate resilience. It recognises NbS—such as restoring wetlands, greening cities, and protecting coastlines—as cost-effective, multifunctional tools that deliver adaptation benefits while supporting biodiversity and human well-being. The strategy commits to mainstreaming NbS across EU policy areas, scaling up investment (including via the Green Deal), and improving knowledge-sharing through initiatives like the Climate-ADAPT platform.

NbS Finance

The EU channels funding into NbS through dedicated programmes and recovery instruments. The EU's H2020 and Horizon Europe Research Programmes have invested **nearly € 800 million** in research and development of NbS. More information see [here](#). The **LIFE Programme** (2021–27) allocates €5.45 billion (with €3.5 billion for environment and biodiversity) to projects involving habitat restoration, green infrastructure, and ecosystem-based adaptation. Under **NextGenerationEU**, over €800 billion is mobilised to support a green transition, with at least 37% earmarked for climate objectives, including NbS approaches.

Additionally, the [Natural Capital Financing Facility \(NCFE\)](#), launched in 2014, provided €125 million of EU/EIB funding to de-risk private investment in proven NbS projects. The EU also funded pioneering research via Horizon Europe —such as in the [Invest4Nature](#) project—to build the market case for NbS and support stakeholder-driven innovation in ecosystem adaptation.

Beyond its borders, the EU invests in NbS through its international cooperation framework, mobilising approximate funds to support sustainable development and climate resilience in neighbouring and global regions. Programmes like EUROCLIMA+ have funded [NbS projects across Latin America](#) and the Caribbean to restore ecosystems, secure water resources, and support vulnerable communities. EU funded projects (in particular the Oppla project leading to the [Oppla platform](#)) contributed to creating the Latin America platform on NbS, [Naturaleza Transformativa](#), launched at CBD COP 16. At a multilateral level, the European Investment Bank's global NbS-related investments—backed by €170 billion in climate financing since 2012—have supported forest management (e.g., [€100 million in Morocco](#)), sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity protection.

NbS Governance

The EU embeds NbS governance within its legal and institutional frameworks, ensuring transparency, public participation, and community-led action. The [Nature Restoration Regulation \(2024\)](#) mandates that restoration plans should be open, transparent, and inclusive. Furthermore, amendments to the [8th Environmental Action Programme](#) require environmental activities, including NbS, generate societal co-benefits, uphold biodiversity integrity, and ensure robust monitoring, accountability, and disclosure.

Internationally, the EU advances inclusive and equity-driven NbS governance externally through its cooperation and human rights frameworks. Its [international cooperation approach regarding climate change](#) promotes co-creation with local communities, gender equality, and social safeguards in programming — enabling actions that work for people and the planet.

Looking Forward

Ongoing or planned knowledge gathering and sharing on NbS best practices across different sectors:

Efforts are ongoing to gather the knowledge and practice generated by EU-funded projects on nature-based solutions applied in different contexts and sectors, with the objective of shedding light on the opportunities offered by NbS and on the already existing successful initiatives, which can be taken as guidance for further uptake.

The upcoming [European Climate Adaptation Plan](#) is expected to foster the deployment of NbS considering their key role for resilience in urban, rural and coastal areas.

This nature-based solutions (NbS) profile provides a summary of the available information on NbS-related policies, financing, and governance in the context of the EU. It has been compiled using data from peer-reviewed academic literature, official government publications, and documentation produced by international non-governmental organisations. This profile is not intended to be exhaustive, and readers are encouraged to consult additional sources for more comprehensive information. Profiles will be updated by the ENACT Secretariat in collaboration with the ENACT partner on an annual basis to ensure information remains current.



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