JUNE 2026

UNLOCKING NATURE FINANCING: National cost estimates for effective nature restoration

CEE Bankwatch Network

EURONATUR

Authors

Branka Španiček
CEE Bankwatch Network

Tess Hartmann-Hergott
EuroNatur

Valters Kinna
CEE Bankwatch Network

Anna Malinowska
Polish Society for the Protection of Birds, Poland

Hrvoje Radovanović
Zelena Akcija, Croatia

Justyna Choroś
Polish Society for the Protection of Birds, Poland

Kristīne Ketrina Putniņa
Green Liberty, Latvia

Sviataslau Valasiuk
Polish Society for the Protection of Birds, Poland

Tristan Saupõld
Estonian Green Movement, Estonia

Zsuzsanna Ujj
MTVSZ, Hungary

The preparation of this report wouldn't be possible without the research, dedication and unwavering support of our colleagues working at the national level. We would also like to thank all the project coordinators and the experts in various ministries and agencies who recognised the value of this research and who dedicated their time to providing us with the necessary data.

Design

Covers and visual elements: **Aleksandar Sasa Skoric**
Layout: **Gosia Zubowicz-Thull**

Contents

Introduction

European habitats are essential for sustaining our livelihoods. They provide clean air, contribute to sustainable food systems, combat pollution, mitigate risks and enhance the continent's overall resilience and health. And yet, these habitats are under threat and 81% of them are in poor condition.[1] If no action is taken to address the alarming rate at which biodiversity is declining, the damage to our livelihoods may become not only tremendously costly, but irreversible. In this context, the Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR),[2] adopted in 2024 is a step in the right direction – it gives the EU an opportunity to reverse this devastating trend. This first-of-its-kind legislation aims to restore Europe's natural heritage through binding restoration targets for specific habitats and species. The goal is to restore all ecosystems in need by 2050.

EU Member States now have until September 2026 to outline the measures that they intend to take for nature restoration as part of their National Restoration Plans (NRPs). The successful implementation of these plans partly depends on whether they will be adequately funded. Member States, which were expecting a European Commission report on the funding of the NRR in August 2025, currently struggle to estimate the necessary investment levels and are looking for options to finance their plans.

In parallel, in July 2025, the European Commission published its proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034. The proposal foresees an overhauled structure that creates significant uncertainty around the future of EU biodiversity funding, and which could possibly hamper the successful implementation of the NRR. Most notably, the European Commission suggests that the EU's only standalone programme dedicated to nature and climate – LIFE – be split up into different funds. The MFF proposal also scraps any mention of an environmental spending target. These changes would reduce the options for biodiversity restoration funding.

Under this new structure, we also observe a renationalisation of part of the EU budget. With negotiations ongoing, Member States will also be asked to prepare National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs) which require them to plan for their upcoming needs and priorities for the economy, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and rural areas, fisheries and maritime issues, prosperity, and security.

[1] European Commission, Nature Restoration Regulation, accessed 5 May 2026.

[2] European Parliament, Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869, EUR-Lex, 29 July 2024.

So far, few attempts have been made to systematically evaluate the costs of various nature restoration measures in the EU.[3] The European Commission has only made preliminary estimates as to how much reaching the goals of the Nature Restoration Regulation will cost.[4] However, for both National and Regional Partnership Plans and National Restoration Plans, Member States will need to put concrete numbers on the table. As a significant share of public funding for nature across the EU comes from the EU budget, it is likely that Member States will require dedicated EU public funding to comply with their obligations under the Nature Restoration Regulation.

The purpose of this exercise is to help assess the financing needs in five Member States for the successful implementation of the NRR, particularly, the restoration of existing habitats in poor condition as defined in Article 4 (1) of the Nature Restoration Regulation. More specifically, we focus on the financing needs for the period 2024–2032[5] for the four most widespread terrestrial ecosystem types as listed in Annex I of the NRR (coastal and inland wetlands; rivers, lakes, alluvial and riparian habitats (freshwater); grasslands; and forests) for Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Poland.

By providing an alternative methodology for the calculation of national restoration financing needs, and coming up with easily comparable results, we want to support these Member States in the elaboration of their NRPs. In doing so, we want to enable them to make the most of ongoing EU budget negotiations and of the new National and Regional Partnership Plans in order to secure sufficient funding for nature restoration.

Methodology to estimate nature restoration costs and limitations

Our research work, which concluded mid-April 2026, included desk research, proactive outreach to EU and national decision-makers, and technical discussions with project implementers and beneficiaries of public funding. Our approach had three steps:

1) We identified the share of habitats in need of restoration to comply with the 2030 target of having 30% of ecosystems restored. To determine the extent of degraded ecosystems, we mainly used national reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive,[6] country reports under the Environmental Implementation Review and additional national level documents, such as national biodiversity strategies.

[3] European Commission Joint Research Centre Institute for Environment and Sustainability, JRC Technical Report: Costs of restoration measures in the EU based on an assessment of LIFE projects, 2015.

[4] European Commission, COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT Accompanying the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on nature restoration, 22 June 2022

[5] As per the uniform format, and considering the Plans' revision in July 2032.

[6] European Council, Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, EUR-Lex, 21 May 1992.

2) We determined the cost of restoration per km^2 for each major ecosystem type, including costs throughout the project lifecycle (pre-feasibility studies, annual maintenance, compensation to stakeholders, awareness raising if relevant to the restoration work, etc.).[7] To do so, we extracted financial information from past restoration projects, particularly recent LIFE projects. In many cases, such as cross-border projects or projects covering several ecosystems, additional dialogue with implementers was needed to disaggregate the data.

3) We calculated the total cost for the four most widespread terrestrial ecosystem types in each of the five target countries for the period August 2024 to July 2032.[8] To do so, we multiplied the median cost per km^2 for each ecosystem type at the national level by the area to be restored by 2030 and then followed a linear trajectory towards 2032, based on the annual cost of restoration by 2030.

During the research, certain limitations were observed and had to be acknowledged:

- This calculation is an approximation. While we strived to be as precise as possible, we cannot predict a country's exact strategy when it comes to nature financing. Neither can we predict future inflation or natural disasters that might negatively impact the costs of nature restoration.
- At the time of publication we cannot predict countries' nature restoration priorities for 2030, so the calculation was made with the assumption that 30% of all considered habitat groups would be restored by 2030. However, for the 2030 goal Member States have a choice in setting priorities,[9] so each country's official calculation might differ.
- Depending on conditions specific to each project's size and scale, as well as each habitat and additional externalities, the price per km^2 varied significantly between projects. Although we worked with the relevant project coordinators to ensure that only restoration-related costs were included and categories were aligned, differences in cost reporting across projects could not be fully eliminated. Median unit costs for price per km^2 were used to reduce the influence of outliers, but results still must be interpreted cautiously and, in the decision making process, should be used together with other estimates.
- In some cases, sufficient exploitable data to make an accurate estimation of the cost of restoration per km^2 was lacking. In these cases, the restoration cost per km^2 for a given ecosystem in the target country was determined through indexing the cost per km^2 in another reference country, using

[7] Nota bene: Our results account for inflation, and all results are in 2026 prices.

[8] Steppe, heath and scrub habitats as well as rocky and dune habitats (also part of the habitat groups covered by the Nature Restoration Regulation) were not analysed in our calculations due to lack of available information on restoration projects across the five target countries.

[9] See Article 4 (10) of the Nature Restoration Regulation.

OECD price level indices,[10] following the formula below. Where this is the case, it is mentioned in the national chapters.

$$RC_P(H) = RC_S(H)\left(\frac{Y_P}{Y_S}\right)$$

where $RC_P(H)$ – habitat *H* restoration costs in the target country (policy country);

$RC_S(H)$ – habitat *H* restoration costs in the reference country (study country);

Y_P, Y_S – per capita GDP adjusted for the purchasing power parity factor in the policy and study countries accordingly.

- As for the latest State of Nature Report, many Member States failed to report under the obligations of Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, or the information was incomplete or not made public, or the state of habitats is marked as 'unknown'. Where this is the case, and our requests for additional information did not succeed, it is mentioned in the national chapters.
- Finally, the estimated costs do not represent the full costs for implementation of the Nature Restoration Law in a Member State, but are only related to Article 4 (1): the restoration of existing habitat areas that are not in a favourable state, but only for the four most widespread terrestrial ecosystem types, and only for the period 2024–2032.

[10] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Price level indices, accessed 5 May 2026.

Croatia

Croatian National Restoration Plan: Current status and progress

As of this writing, Croatia has not published its National Restoration Plan (NRP). However, in mid-April a proposal regarding restoration areas and measures for the NRP draft was published on the website of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition, which is coordinating the preparation of the NRP. The ambition is to have the first draft of the plan ready by the September 2026 deadline.

After an initial period in which there was practically no publicly available information on the process, in the last couple of months the ministry made real efforts to include NGOs and the wider public. In November 2025, it launched an online survey which enabled participants to propose specific areas that need restoration, as well as to suggest appropriate restoration measures. Initially aimed at experts within the wider nature protection sector, it was later also opened to the general public.[11] Apart from that, the ministry has organised a series of meetings with relevant sectors (e.g. agriculture, forestry, water management, fisheries, etc.), including an online meeting with NGOs in February 2026. The NGOs were also invited to nominate members to the ministry's working group for the development of the NRP. Ten regional stakeholder meetings to present and discuss the draft proposal for areas and measures were also announced by the ministry. Although these efforts to include the interested public in the process are certainly laudable, it remains to be seen how much real influence NGOs and the wider nature protection sector will exert on the final version of the NRP, especially compared to more politically powerful sectors. Namely, though there seems to be genuine will amongst the people preparing the NRP within the ministry to make it as comprehensive as possible, historically, nature protection hasn't been very high on the list of priorities of any Croatian government. When the interests of nature come into direct conflict with other interests, it is usually nature that gets sacrificed.

Like in many other countries in central and eastern Europe, nature protection and restoration in Croatia are heavily dependent on EU funding.[12] Thus far, no official estimates on the costs and sources of financing for Croatia's NRP have been published, but it is almost certain that the implementation of the plan will heavily depend on EU funds. In this context, the successful implementation of the measures foreseen in the NRP will to a large extent depend on there being sufficient funds available at the EU level.

[11] Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition, Sudjelovanje građana u izradi Nacionalnog plana obnove prirode, 9 December 2025.

[12] Numbers on the exact ratio of EU vs. national funding are difficult to come by, but it is safe to say that most of the national funding that is available goes into co-financing of EU projects or covering operating expenses of the state's nature protection sector (salaries, etc.).

Estimating nature restoration costs in Croatia

This methodology provides a bottom-up financial estimate for a substantial part of the costs of implementing the EU Nature Restoration Law in Croatia, specifically targeting the recovery of existing habitats that are not in a good condition, as defined in Article 4 (1) of the Nature Restoration Regulation. The methodology focuses on the most widespread habitat groups: wetlands; grasslands; river, lake, alluvial and riparian habitats; and forests.

The calculation of the total area requiring restoration for each ecosystem type, based on publicly available data for the 2019-2024 reporting period under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive,[13] is complicated by the fact that, for a significant number of Natura 2000 habitats, the extent of areas classified as having an 'unknown' condition far exceeds those reported as either 'good' or 'not good'. This results in restoration need estimates that vary by several orders of magnitude depending on whether the 'unknown' category is included. For this reason, we decided to use the abovementioned proposal for areas and measures published by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition. This proposal includes additional sources on top of the Article 17 report and it gives estimates of total restoration needs that are probably more realistic than simply including all or none of the areas in 'unknown' condition.

The ministry's proposal consists of three different datasets:

1. Areas based on the ministry's analyses in accordance with the national report on the state of conservation of species and habitats for the period 2019-2024 and the ministry's databases;
2. Areas on which restoration projects are currently being implemented in Croatia and areas designated through consultations with relevant sectors;
3. All areas proposed by the members of the public through the abovementioned survey.

For our analysis, we decided to use only the first two datasets[14] (downloaded on 16 April 2026) because the quality of the proposals gathered through the open survey may vary more than the other two datasets. The resulting values can be seen in the table below. However, due to the significant data gaps mentioned above, the fact that at least some of the proposals gathered through the public survey will be accepted, and the announcement from the ministry that their published data will be updated with additional areas in the future, these numbers are best treated as the minimal restoration needs.

Due to the low number of restoration projects implemented in Croatia, there is insufficient data to make reliable estimates of restoration costs per km^2. Thus, to calculate the restoration costs for Croatia, the only

[13] Reportnet, Habitats Directive reporting (Art. 17) - 2019-2024, accessed 22 April 2026.

[14] To calculate the total surface in need of restoration for every ecosystem type, the shapefiles for different datasets published by the ministry were analysed using QGIS 3.44.9. To solve the problem of overlapping polygons, Merge and Dissolve operations were performed on different layers containing information for a certain ecosystem type, and the total surface of the resulting shape was then calculated.

option was indexation, i.e., using estimated costs from a comparable country with sufficient data on restoration costs and using price level indices to compare prices between the two countries. We chose to base our calculations on Hungarian data due to Hungary's geographical proximity to Croatia, though this has important limitations. Namely, although the two countries share a border, there are still significant differences between the habitat types present. Hungary is a good approximation for the continental region of Croatia, as they are both part of the Pannonian basin and thus share a lot of common species and habitats. However, there are also Alpine and Mediterranean parts of Croatia for which Hungary is not such a good comparison.[15]

As a source for price level indices, we used the OECD website,[16] which assigns values of 57 and 58 for Croatia and Hungary, respectively. Thus, restoration costs per km^2 were calculated for every habitat type using the formula: costs (HR) = 0.98 * costs (HU). The results are shown in the table below.

Results

	Area to be restored at national level by 2030 (km^2)	**Median restoration cost per km^2 (EUR, January 2026 prices)**	**Restoration cost at national level by 2030 (area to be restored at national level*cost per km^2) (EUR, January 2026 prices)**
Coastal and inland wetlands	134 * 0.3 = 40	181 142	7 245 680
Rivers, lakes and alluvial (freshwater)	912 * 0.3 = 274	268 372	73 533 928
Grasslands	225 * 0.3 = 68	195 422	13 288 696
Forest and woodland	3 471 * 0.3 = 1 041	276 068	287 386 788
TOTAL (by 2030)			**381 455 092[a]**

TOTAL cost for the period August 2024 – July 2032			**469 483 190[a]**

[15] Probably the least reliable estimate is the one for Coastal and inland wetlands, as estuaries, lagoons and other coastal habitats make around 2/3 of the total surface area of that ecosystem type that needs restoration in Croatia, while there are no comparable habitats in landlocked Hungary.

[16] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Price level indices.

Calculations for Hungary were performed using full-precision data then rounded to the nearest whole number. Thus, rounded totals may not sum exactly.

[a]Since median (and not mean) was used to calculate costs of restoration for each habitat group to reduce the impact of outliers, the TOTAL sums should be considered as aggregated estimates, not precise totals.

Conclusions and recommendations

During our research, we discovered that the biggest problem plaguing the preparation of the National Restoration Plan in Croatia is the lack of data on all levels. The condition of significant parts of Natura 2000 habitats is still largely unknown, which means that it is impossible to determine real restoration needs in a systematic and objective way. In this situation, the people preparing the proposal for restoration areas had to rely on information that is partial, of differing quality and based on restoration projects and measures that are already in progress or that should start in the near future. On top of that, the current proposal for restoration areas still must be discussed with other, politically more powerful sectors, meaning that the areas that will make it to the final draft will almost certainly be reduced compared to the current proposal. This means that there is a real danger that the total restoration needs for Croatia will be significantly underestimated already at the level of designated areas.

The fact that major restoration projects are only just beginning in Croatia, and that there is therefore less experience in this area than in some other countries, poses an additional risk that real restoration costs may be underestimated. There is very limited national funding available for nature, a high reliance on EU funds and even when these funds are available, nature ranks low on the list of priorities of the Croatian government.[17] This leads to a reasonable doubt that sufficient funding will be secured to meet restoration needs. Another bottleneck is the very limited capacity of the nature protection sector in Croatia, meaning that a lot of restoration activities will probably have to be implemented in cooperation with other sectors, for whom nature is usually not a top priority.

Recommendations

Research activities aimed at securing comprehensive, reliable and up to date data on the real condition of natural habitats in Croatia must be prioritised and accelerated. For this purpose, Croatia should dedicate part of its NRP budget for research and data collection. Although we cannot afford to wait for all this data to be gathered, as nature restoration needs to begin as soon as possible, the restoration plan should be updated regularly as these data become available to better reflect real restoration needs. A more objective basis for the NRP could also reduce the influence of other sectors on the final shape that it takes.

[17] As exemplified by the negligible amount of NRR funding that went to nature. See: CEE Bankwatch Network and EuroNatur, Building back biodiversity: How EU Member States fail to spend the recovery fund for nature, May 2021.

A dedicated EU fund for nature restoration should be created, potentially by redirecting funds that currently subsidise activities damaging to nature. As the national sources of funding will in all likelihood never be sufficient to meet the real restoration needs, the capacity for absorption of EU funds must be raised.

The capacities of the nature protection sector in Croatia must be increased significantly in order for it to be able to contribute to achieving the goals set in the NRP in a meaningful way. This includes employing new people and increasing their expertise. Thus, part of the NRP budget should be dedicated to capacity building.

More pressure should be put on the Croatian government, both on the national and international level, to put nature protection and restoration higher on its list of priorities.

Old flow of the Mura River (photo: Branka Španiček).

Estonia

Estonian National Restoration Plan: Current status and progress

Despite the Estonian government's overall low prioritisation of biodiversity goals, there has been a notable political will for nature restoration. Industry attempts to shape public opinion – by portraying wooded wetland restoration as 'drowning forests' – have failed to undermine the Ministry of Climate's resolve to restore Estonian habitats, which are increasingly in declining condition. Estonia supported an ambitious Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR) in 2022-2023 and vowed to strive for its goals even when it was temporarily left unapproved at the European level in early 2024.

However, the subsequent National Restoration Plan (NRP) drafting can be characterised by extended deadlines and lacklustre inclusion. Progress has been slower than foreseen and has resulted in the expected draft deadline shifting from spring to the end of the year, leaving little time for considering the Commission's feedback. The schedule could become even tighter, or longer, due to a recent proposal to create another format for consulting with practitioners.

The public has been included in the process through stakeholder engagement seminars, though participation is limited to either asking questions from predetermined panelists or group discussions split up according to habitat categories. Additionally, selected stakeholders are included in the lead committee where, in positive contrast, meetings offer more opportunities to share opinions and discuss. Further inclusion is envisioned through meetings, need-based dialogues and potentially a people's assembly.

The ministry has communicated their plans to include as little private land as possible, but it needs to be assessed to what extent (and by which target deadlines) it is possible for the goals of the NRR to be achieved with minimal inclusion of private land. Private property constitutes a substantial share of Estonian agricultural ecosystems (92%), grasslands (67%) and forests (50%), as well as a crucial percentage of coastal ecosystems (34%), bodies of water (30%) and wetlands (12%). This ownership pattern suggests that the feasibility of limiting nature restoration to state lands differs by habitat.

EU funding has been vital for nature conservation in Estonia up to now. For example, EU funds have provided 71% of the funding for semi-natural community restorations from 2014 to 2020.[18] Estonia's dependence on the EU continues, and the ministry has stated that 'a large share' of the NRP's funding will come from different EU funds.[19] The ministry will be applying for funding from the LIFE programme under

[18] Estonian Environmental Board, Pärandniitude tegevuskava 2021-2027, 24 March 2021.

[19] Estonian Ministry of Climate, Kui palju looduse taastamine maksab ja kes selle eest maksab?.

the project LIFE SNAP RESTore2Connect, which could provide up to EUR 33 million for restoration.[20] Still, without clear insight into the National and Regional Partnership Plan, and with the absence of a biodiversity-specific funding instrument, it appears the government's approach to selecting prospective measures may end up being overly restrained.

Estimating nature restoration costs in Estonia

This methodology provides a bottom-up financial estimate for a substantial part of the costs of implementing the Nature Restoration Regulation in Estonia, specifically targeting the recovery of existing habitats that are not in a good condition, as defined in Article 4 (1) of the Nature Restoration Regulation. The methodology focuses on the most widespread habitat groups: wetlands; grasslands; and river, lake, alluvial and riparian habitats.

The forest habitat group has been excluded from the final calculation for Estonia due to an insufficient number of projects evaluated and vast differences between the project costs in the region (Latvia and Estonia). According to the provisional Estonian dry forest action plan,[21] the cost of preserving and restoring forest habitats is estimated to be EUR 4 million for the period 2025-2032.

The calculation is based on 18 nature restoration projects completed over the past 17 years, most of which were funded by the LIFE programme or jointly by the Cohesion Fund and the Estonian Environmental Investment Centre (the list of projects can be found in Annex 1 at the end of this document). The projects were selected on the basis of representativeness and quality, both the potential variety of restoration measures and the typicality of habitats.

Data regarding habitat condition was accessed through the Ministry of Climate's current status report sent to participation seminar attendees and is based on the Habitats Directive 2019-2024 reporting under Article 17.[22] The main limitation to this data is that the exact division of how the 30% restoration target will be added up between different groups of habitats is not known. Based on the government's comprehensive approach, i.e., the plan to restore habitats belonging to ecosystems of every type, a simplification that 30% of each group of habitats will be restored is used in this calculation. Another limitation is that the information held by the Ministry of Climate includes habitats in an unknown condition. In this calculation, we adhere to the ministry's approach of using a mean between the potential minimum and maximum of areas to be restored. This way, the margin of error is limited to 15 km^2 for grasslands and is even smaller for wetlands and freshwater habitats.

[20] Estonian State Forest Management Centre, Mart Kiis: "Kuidas viia looduse taastamise suured strateegilised sihid Eesti maastikele?", 24 November 2025.

[21] Loodusrikas Eesti, Kuivade metsaelupaigatüüpide tegevuskava konsultatsioonideks, November 2025.

[22] Estonian Environmental Agency, Loodusdirektiivi artikkel 17 aruanne 2019-2024, 21 November 2025.

In calculating median costs, the margin of error is likely smaller for wetlands and grasslands, although restoration costs for all habitats are heavily dependent on measures and priorities not yet agreed upon. Moreover, the range of prior projects available does not allow for the full capture of the wide variety of habitats due for restoration, indicating that uncommon, and presumably more expensive projects, may be underestimated.

The assessment for wetlands is predominantly based on mires, while the cost maximum was set by a less typical coastal lagoon restoration. For grasslands, the cost is a combination of different meadow habitat restorations. For rivers, lakes and alluvial habitats, our range covers alluvial meadows, common river habitats and spawning grounds. *This is based on the assumption from expert group protocols that in the NRP, active river restoration measures will initially be prioritised. The final cost comes from the meticulous yet cost-wise median project LIFE HAPPYFISH that treated both water courses and alluvial meadows, but focused on spawning grounds and oxbow lakes, which can be comparatively costly to restore.* Excluded are lakes, alluvial forests, as well as weir and dam removal projects for which the average cost is, per the State Forest Management Centre,[23] around EUR 140 000.

Results

	Area to be restored at national level by 2030 (km²)	**Median restoration cost per km² (EUR, January 2026 prices); [range]; n = number of projects considered**	**Restoration cost at national level by 2030 (area to be restored at national level*cost per km²) (EUR, January 2026 prices)**
Coastal and inland wetlands	524 * 0.3 = 157	44 310; [19 957 - 797 388]; n = 5	157 * 44 310 = 6 956 670
Rivers, lakes and alluvial (freshwater)	80 * 0.3 = 24	1 774 995; [128 799 - 22 736 995]; n = 5	24 * 1 774 995 = 42 599 880
Grasslands	68 * 0.3 = 20.4	390 592; [217 863 - 713 900]; n = 9	20.4 * 390 592 = 7 968 077
TOTAL (by 2030)			**57 524 627[a]**

TOTAL cost for the period August 2024 – July 2032			**70 799 541[a]**

[23] Information acquired from the State Forest Management Centre through request via email.

Calculations were performed using full-precision data then rounded to the nearest whole number. Thus, rounded totals may not sum exactly.

[a] Since median (and not mean) was used to calculate costs of restoration for each habitat group to reduce the impact of outliers, the TOTAL sums should be considered as aggregated estimates, not precise totals.

Conclusions and recommendations

Merely four months ahead of the draft deadline, too little progress has been made in Estonia to provide comprehensive feedback on financing the plan. The timely recognition of Estonia's financial needs should therefore be a priority. By our calculations, based only on selected habitat groups, these financial needs amount to at least EUR 70 million for the 2024-2032 period.

Our comparisons to estimations from earlier habitat action plans show that the NRR's targets are potentially realistic, and measures could be regarded as financially comparable to earlier state-level plans. For reference, it was previously estimated that EUR 10.8 million would be needed to restore mires from 2016 to 2023[24] and more than EUR 31 million for restoring rivers from 2022 to 2027.[25,26,27] Ultimately, the cost will depend on what the eventual measures are. In the example of wetlands, focusing on common mire restorations would be cheaper than a broad solution that fully incorporated lagoons and estuaries, but this would also bring benefits to fewer habitats.

Despite some uncertainties, the NRP holds tremendous potential if backed with sufficient funding and if the implementation goes beyond minimal compliance. High-quality nature restoration can significantly improve Estonia's Nature and Birds Directive results, whilst benefiting diverse ecosystems that are home to thousands of species. An ambitious plan would be an investment in a wide variety of ecosystem services, climate mitigation and nature tourism.

Conversely, inadequate funding and overcaution could exacerbate the deterioration of Estonian ecosystems, especially since other national conservation measures are insufficient to balance out intensive forest management, peat extraction and land development. Without the help of a confident plan, nature degradation looks unlikely to be reversed and European biodiversity objectives remain but a distant dream.

To prevent biodiversity loss and the many resulting socio-economic impacts, it is essential for Estonia to ensure that sufficient EU funding can supplement the state budget.

[24] Estonian Ministry of Environment, Kaitstavate soode tegevuskava aastateks 2016-2023, 33, 2016.

[25] Estonian Ministry of Environment, Lääne-Eesti vesikonna veemajanduskava 2022-2027, 181, 2022.

[26] Estonian Ministry of Environment. Ida-Eesti vesikonna veemajanduskava 2022-2027, 172, 2022.

[27] Estonian Ministry of Environment, Koiva vesikonna veemajanduskava 2022-2027, 160, 2022.

Photo: Jaanus Tanilsoo

Recommendations

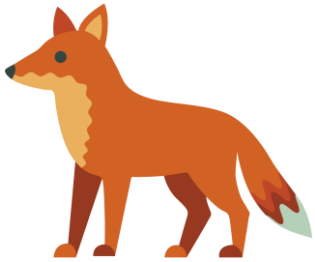
Estonia should strategically emphasise nature restoration needs both in the ongoing Multiannual Financial Framework negotiations in Brussels, as well as throughout the National and Regional Partnership Plan development gaining momentum nationally.

Estonia should acknowledge nature restoration as an investment, go beyond the 30% target, desist from excluding private lands and consequently ensure that meaningful dialogues with landowners are backed by adequate compensations.

To stay in line with the goals of the NRR, measures need to be picked not by affordability but by efficiency. To do so, Estonia should follow the efficiency standards set by several successful LIFE projects such as LIFE to alvars, URBANCOWS and LIFE Mires Estonia.

Should the Ministry of Climate introduce new formats for inclusion, these must not delay the submission deadline. The process is already behind schedule and further impediments might hinder the plan's quality and the attainment of the NRR's targets.

Clarity around the areas in unknown condition is needed as soon as possible, so that the habitats in unsatisfactory condition can benefit from sufficient restoration funding. The budget should therefore account for environmental condition assessments and for subsequent restoration where needed.



Hungary

Hungarian National Restoration Plan: Current status and progress

Hungary plans to submit its National Restoration Plan on time. Implementation requires the close coordination of several ministries and coordination meetings and drafting are underway. While a single, unified draft document does not yet exist, work is proceeding along thematic lines corresponding to the specific articles of the Regulation.

A formal, structured framework for public, stakeholder and civil society involvement is planned. Several NGO experts are involved in the working groups. The organisation of civil society involvement and the management of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) have been outsourced to an environmental organisation, the National Society of Conservationists – Friends of the Earth Hungary. Conclusions from the SEA and inputs from the public together with the comments and recommendations of the European Commission will be incorporated into the plan in 2027.

Funding of the Regulation's implementation is highly uncertain. Implementation is expected to rely almost exclusively on European Union funds. For the current programming period, the strategy focuses on identifying existing measures within the CAP Strategic Plan, the Environmental and Energy Efficiency Operational Programme Plus, and LIFE projects to align them with restoration targets. Regarding future financing, Hungary's plans for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) remain fluid and highly dependent on future EU-level budget negotiations. The financial architecture of the plan is still in the very early stages of quantification. The primary baseline for future cost calculations will be the national Natura 2000 Prioritised Action Framework (PAF).[28]

Land ownership, usufruct and land management tasks often belong to different actors. For example, several protected forests are managed by state-owned forestry companies instead of national parks. These companies, taking advantage of weak protection laws, are able to maintain unsustainable logging practices in protected forests. Currently, there is no plan or strategy on how to solve this problem, but an evaluation is expected between autumn 2026 and spring 2027.

Estimating nature restoration costs in Hungary

This methodology provides a bottom-up financial estimate for a substantial part of the costs of implementing the EU Nature Restoration Law in Hungary, specifically targeting the recovery of existing

[28] Ministry of Agriculture, Natura 2000 Prioritised Action Framework, 2021.

habitats that are not in a good condition, as defined in Article 4 (1) of the Nature Restoration Regulation. The methodology focuses on the most widespread habitat groups: wetlands; grasslands; river, lake, alluvial and riparian habitats; and forests.

The calculation is based on empirical data from 19 conservation projects (Environmental and Energy Efficiency Operational Programme and LIFE programmes) conducted over the past 13 years, where habitat restoration was the primary objective (the list of projects can be found in Annex 1 at the end of this document).

Exchange rate and inflation adjustments: A considerable part of the costs are national contributions denominated in forints. For projects denominated in euros (most LIFE projects), costs were converted to Hungarian forints using the average exchange rate of the project's start year. Project budgets typically account for inflation, so in this methodology inflation was accounted for by calculating out from each project's costs in the closing year to determine the present value in forints. All figures were converted back to euros using the exchange rate from January 2026 to establish a current value.

Habitat categorisation and cost allocation: Costs were allocated using either area-proportional distribution or weighted spending based on specific project goals. Refinements were based on interviews with project managers.

Upscaling: The median cost per hectare derived from these projects was multiplied by the total national extent of 'not good' status habitats (as reported under the Habitats Directive 2025 report).[29]

Representativeness: The current sample covers 303 km^2, representing roughly 7% of the total 4,236 km^2 requiring restoration. While data for grasslands and wetlands is adequate, the sample size for rivers and limited, leading to higher uncertainty in these categories.

Photo: Antal Molnar

[29] European Commission, Reportnet 3, accessed 11 March 2026.

Results

	Area to be restored at national level (km²) by 2030	Median restoration cost per km² (EUR, January 2026 prices) [range]; n= number of projects considered	Restoration cost at national level (area to be restored at national level*cost per km²) (EUR, January 2026 prices)
Coastal and inland wetlands	240	184 839 [21 928-4 692 770]; n = 10	44 321 756
Rivers, lakes and alluvial (freshwater)	246	273 849 [43 144-4 700 351]; n = 3	67 276 547
Grasslands	232	199 410 [36 480-393 175]; n = 9	46 277 741
Forest and woodland	553	281 702 [210 801-5 772 064]; n = 7	155 837 464
TOTAL by 2030			**313 713 508[a]**

TOTAL 2024-2032			**386 108 933[a]**

Calculations were performed using full-precision data, then rounded to the nearest whole number for this table. Thus, rounded totals may not sum exactly.

[a]Since median (and not mean) was used to calculate costs of restoration for each habitat group to reduce the impact of outliers, the TOTAL sums should be considered aggregated estimates, not precise totals.

Conclusions and recommendations

The funding gap for nature restoration is massive. In the past, Hungary has consistently fallen short of providing adequate funding for nature conservation and restoration. While allocating EU funding for the current MFF, only 15% of the costs listed in the PAF have been allocated. This has been the joint decision of

the EU Commission and the Hungarian government. Another major potential funding source, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, has also completely failed with regards to biodiversity.[30]

We cannot rely on the rollout of existing projects to meet the 2030 goals. The chronic lag in EU decision-making processes, combined with disbursement rules that permit spending for two years beyond the financial period, creates a structural delay. This means that by the time a new funding system is actually operationalised, the window to achieve 2030 restoration targets will have almost closed.

In addition, administrative and expert capacities, both at the implementing ministries and at the national parks who are managing the protected areas, are insufficient to implement the Regulation.

Finally, land ownership, usufruct and management rights pose a strategic risk. If not addressed in a proactive way, this risk can jeopardise the entire restoration process.

Recommendations

- Ensuring additionality early in the process by moving beyond already allocated funds:

Restoration must not remain an empty exercise; previous and ongoing projects will not result in 30% restoration levels by 2030. The government must immediately allocate additional resources specifically for restoration to meet the EUR 314 million need by 2030. The planned renewal of the negotiations between the EU Commission and the Hungarian government on the Recovery and Resilience Facility provides an unexpected second chance to make up for the missed opportunity to increase biodiversity funding in this Facility.

- Ensuring adequate funding in the long-term:

Create a ring-fenced fund for nature restoration at the EU level. Redirect funds that degrade habitats towards nature restoration. Hungary should incorporate its habitat restoration requirements into the strategic architecture of its National and Regional Partnership Plans thereby maximising the efficiency of allocated funds.

- Conflict mapping and developing a land strategy:

Specific financial incentives introduced through the Common Agricultural Policy are needed (for example to incentivise long-term stewardship and manage land swaps) to encourage landowners and usufruct rights holders to participate in the restoration process.

- Formalise stakeholder engagement to prevent potential conflicts:

[30] CEE Bankwatch Network, Biodiversity loses out in Hungary's recovery and resilience plan, 8 December 2025.

Nature restoration will create land use conflicts. A proactive approach can preempt or mitigate conflicts. We propose the establishment of nature restoration coordination forums that include NGOs, scientists, landowners, land users and other stakeholders to ensure the social mandate for the plan.

- Scale up administrative capacity:

As a part of the NRP, investment in the capacity of National Park Directorates and the ministry is needed to enable them to handle the complex planning and monitoring tasks required for the implementation of the plan.

Our findings indicate that the scale of restoration required (1,271 km^2 by 2030, 3,812 km^2 by 2050) is too vast for the current 'business-as-usual' administrative and financial approach. Without increased and dedicated funding, a structured participation framework, and a strategic approach to conflict management, Hungary risks failing its restoration targets and failing to deliver actual ecological recovery.

Photo: Antal Molnar

Latvia

Latvian National Restoration Plan: Current status and progress

In Latvia, the Department of Nature Conservation at the Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development is coordinating the preparation of the National Restoration Plan (NRP). According to the information provided by the ministry, the preparation commenced in late 2024.[31]

As of April 2025, four working group meetings with representatives from state institutions, academic entities, business associations and non-governmental organisations have taken place where participants discussed issues such as the general requirements in the NRP, area estimates for restoration, and potential measures in forests, wetlands, agricultural land and elsewhere.[32]

It is expected that the ministry will present the preliminary version of the draft plan and open it to comments from the working group in the second half of April 2025. After adjustments, the plan will be made public and the ministry will await comments from a broader scope of stakeholders. If all goes as planned, the final governmental vote on the plan is expected to take place in July.

Using the latest date from 2025, the restoration needs for Article 4 of the Regulation have been calculated by the ministry by summing up areas in inadequate, bad and unknown conservation statuses. Since nature experts in Latvia from 2017 to 2021 conducted a nature census, the extent of habitats is well documented and for a large part the conservation status of habitats is known.[33] This makes it feasible to designate areas for restoration, as well as to determine actions for filling data gaps.

In Latvia, national funding for nature conservation and restoration is scarce due to the small-scale economy and many competing priorities. The implementation of the Prioritised Action Framework largely depends on EU funding.[34] Thus, EU investment is crucial to achieve the goals agreed upon by EU Member States and improve the state of nature.

[31] Green Liberty, Latvian Ornithological Society, Latvian Fund for Nature, Pasaules dabas fonds, Developing Latvia's Nature Restoration Plan: A Mid-Term Assessment, 14 November 2025.

[32] Information (here and further on) obtained through participation in the National Restoration Plan working group (publicly unavailable information).

[33] Nature Conservation Agency of the Republic of Latvia, Dabas skaitīšana, 9 January 2025.

[34] Nature Conservation Agency of the Republic of Latvia, Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) for Natura 2000 in Latvia, accessed 15 April 2026.

A wooded meadow habitat in Ziemeļgauja (photo: Latvian Fund for Nature)

The restoration expenditure for 2027–2032 will be calculated by the ministry based upon input from other relevant authorities on the funding mechanisms already in place and ongoing or planned project expenses at the time of drafting. According to the information provided during the working group meetings, resources allocated to measures within the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan, the Territorial Just Transition Plan, LIFE and similar projects will be utilised, as well as funding obtainable from the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund.

Since the Nature Restoration Regulation allows for it, the measures in the first period of the plan will focus on public land, especially Natura 2000 areas. Though this approach might not fully reflect overall restoration needs, around half of forest land, most bogs, mires and water bodies in Latvia are owned by the state and municipalities. To reach private landowners, a revision of the compensation system needs to be completed and funding for these expenses needs to be secured, following a prolonged period of tough discussions between the stakeholders involved.[35]

Issues surrounding the needs of nature and nature's contributions to people have been highly politicised over the years, and attempts to prioritise nature restoration measures have faced significant pushback from the forestry, peat and agriculture sectors. There is also little support for reaching the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, that is, protecting 30% of land and marine areas and placing 10% of EU land and sea areas under strict protection. Sustainability is rarely prioritised during short term governance cycles or business processes.

[35] Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia, Par priekšlikumiem kompensāciju nodrošināšanai par saimnieciskās darbības ierobežojumiem aizsargājamās teritorijās un iespējamajiem finanšu avotiem kompensāciju segšanai, Tiesību aktu portāls, 14 October 2024.

Estimating nature restoration costs in Latvia

This methodology provides a bottom-up financial estimate for a substantial part of the costs of implementing the Nature Restoration Regulation in Latvia, specifically targeting the recovery of existing habitats that are not in a good condition, as defined in Article 4 (1) of the Nature Restoration Regulation. The methodology focuses on the most widespread habitat groups: wetlands; grasslands; and river, lake, alluvial and riparian habitats.

The forest habitat group has been excluded from the final calculation for Latvia due to an insufficient number of projects evaluated and vast differences between the project costs in the region (Latvia and Estonia). Moreover, due to the division of habitat groups in the Regulation, a considerable area of coastal dune forests had to be ruled out from the calculations within the report because the report does not cover the dune habitat group.

To estimate areas for restoration, we used calculations that were made by the ministry that is coordinating the development of the plan and which were shared with the working group. For the purposes of the report, an assumption was made that out of each habitat group, 30% of the calculated area will have to be restored by 2030, instead of 30% from all habitats, as noted in the Regulation.

To calculate the costs of restoring a square kilometer of a habitat group, financial information from seven projects since 2010 was obtained and utilised – six LIFE projects and one Cohesion Fund project. Acquiring information from more projects proved to be difficult due to current or past project coordinators being overworked and unavailable. Project expenditure related to restoration activities was attributed to the area of restored habitat groups within the project.

Further, inflation was accounted for by assuming all costs occurred in the last year of each project and then calculating the inflation rate out from that year to get 2026 values. For two of the projects, only the planned costs were obtained instead of the real costs, since the projects are still ongoing and no final financial assessment has been made yet. For these projects, inflation was deducted at the current level of 3.41% annually in Latvia.

With regards to the limitations encountered during research, most projects that restored multiple habitat types did not break down the costs and activities according to habitat type. Thus, assumptions had to be made to split different expense categories according to grouped habitat types, including administrative, planning, monitoring, technical and communications costs related to restoration.

It is also possible that there is a mismatch between the cost categories included in the numbers provided by different project coordinators, since the data was aggregated in different manners. By default, not all cost categories will be incurred in every restoration project. For example, certain costs may not arise when the project is implemented by a state institution with existing administrative, technical, communications or other relevant capacity.

Furthermore, not all of the areas restored within projects were classified as habitats under Annex I of the Habitats Directive. For example, some projects also focused on the improvement of species breeding, feeding and other sites, regardless of the habitat status. For such projects, assumptions had to be made on the allocation of areas to habitat groups based on updated maps from the nature census or functional similarities to the habitat groups.

Moreover, restoration measures tend to significantly differ between projects. For example, for successful restoration in one wetland project the blocking of ditches might be sufficient, while in others more activities must be carried out, such as the clearing of overgrowth, native vegetation planting, etc. Due to this, the report may underestimate things like the cost of restoring wetland habitats in Latvia, since the main measure in the projects was hydrological restoration.

Due to specifics of the national restoration uniform format, errors might arise as a result of habitats being split into groups differently than in the Habitats Directive. For example, forest habitat types are present in wetland, freshwater, dune and forest habitat groups, whereas grassland habitat types are present in wetland, freshwater and dune habitat groups. Thus, while freshwater habitat restoration costs are generally the highest, in the evaluated projects vast areas of alluvial or floodplain grasslands were restored, bringing the cost of freshwater habitat restoration closer to that of grassland restoration.

Altogether, this resulted in significant ranges in the cost per km^2 of a restored habitat from project to project. Thus, the numbers must be interpreted cautiously and should only be used in decision making if accompanied by other estimates.

Restored alluvial grasslands of the Sita and Pededze rivers (photo: Mārtiņš Kreilis)

Results

	Area to be restored at national level by 2030 (km^2)	Median restoration cost per km^2 (EUR, January 2026 prices); [range]; n = number of projects considered	Restoration cost at national level by 2030 (area to be restored at national level*cost per km^2) (EUR, January 2026 prices)
Coastal and inland wetlands	320	72 655 [56 964–88 346]; n = 2	23 233 733
Rivers, lakes and alluvial (freshwater)	237	694 507 [85 199–2 242 819]; n = 5	164 528 801
Grasslands	100	534 974 [156 802–828 954]; n = 4	53 278 071
TOTAL (by 2030)			**241 040 604[a]**

TOTAL cost for the period August 2024 – July 2032			**296 665 359[a]**

[a] *Since median was used to calculate the costs of restoration for each habitat group to reduce the impact of outliers, the TOTAL sums should be considered as aggregated estimates, not precise totals.*

Conclusions and recommendations

At the moment, 90% of habitats listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive in Latvia have an inadequate, bad or unknown conservation status, and the situation has worsened overall since 2019.[36] Vast areas must be restored by 2050. This will require significant investment. Final calculations presented by Member States can act as an important reminder to EU institutions about the level of support that is needed.

Since the draft plan had not yet been published at the time of writing (April 15), it is difficult to know whether the funding needs estimated in the report will be met. Considering ongoing biodiversity funding challenges

[36] Nature Conservation Agency of the Republic of Latvia, Ziņojumi Eiropas Komisijai, accessed 15 April 2026.

in Latvia, as well as the information presented during the working group meetings (including for the plan to rely mostly on existing funding sources and project resources, at least for the first period), it is likely that there will be a significant gap in funding.

The lack of clarity about the funding opportunities in the next MFF and about EU support for the National Restoration Plans adds to the uncertainty of Latvian stakeholders on the ability to fulfil the goals set out in the Regulation. Alongside the ongoing deregulation processes in the EU and nationally, this uncertainty is fueling objections from private landowners and industry stakeholders. Since a public consensus on the importance and roles of biodiversity is absent, financial incentives are more often than not required to facilitate support. This will become increasingly relevant, as more areas outside of those already protected by the Natura 2000 network will have to be included in restoration measures.

Recommendations

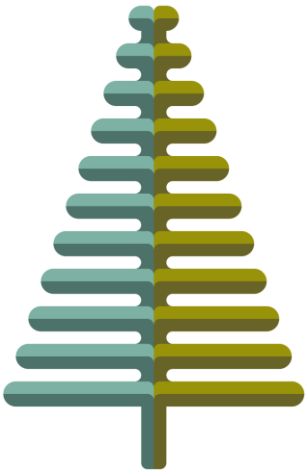
The estimates presented in the Latvian and other national draft plans must be honest and bold – truthful about what's required and aiming for sustainable long-term results rather than being a reflection of existing funding streams.

All actors qualified to contribute to the restoration goals must be consulted and included in the implementation of the plan and supported with appropriate resources in order to contribute to the national capacity for restoration.

Stakeholders must seek to reach an environmentally and socially fair agreement on compensation for limiting economic activity to ensure that restoration measures are implemented on private land.

The restoration measures implemented to achieve different articles of the Regulation must be scientifically grounded, reciprocal and aligned with the measures set out in climate change mitigation and adaptation policies in a manner that is not detrimental to biodiversity.

It is crucial for the relevant institutions in Member States to advocate for increased biodiversity funding in the new European budget, including earmarking in the National and Regional Partnership Plans. Setting nature restoration as a strategic, cross-cutting, and intergovernmental priority is imperative.



Poland

Polish National Restoration Plan: Current status and progress

The Polish National Restoration Plan (NRP) has not yet been published. However, draft versions of selected articles have been released. Based on publicly available information, the plan is expected to be completed and published by 1 September 2026. As of April 2026, a pre-consultation process covering selected articles is underway. According to official announcements, the full draft will be made available for public consultation at the turn of June and July 2026.

Officials from the Ministry of Climate and Environment, which is responsible for preparing the NRP, have repeatedly expressed their political commitment to urge the Commission to provide adequate funding and ensure the plan's implementation. However, at this stage, civil society actors are unable to verify whether these declarations will be supported by concrete actions from other relevant ministries. In Poland, two additional ministries play a key role: the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (responsible for agricultural implementation) and the Ministry of Infrastructure, which supervises the State Water Management Authority Polish Waters, responsible for water management.

Funding for nature conservation and restoration in Poland relies significantly on the LIFE programme.[37] Additional resources are available through national and regional environmental funds, but these remain insufficient to meet overall needs.

The current level of subsidiarity is assessed as low. Non-governmental organisations and local authorities have not been adequately involved in the process. NGOs were excluded from most working groups, except for issues related to Article 10 on pollinator restoration, despite repeated requests for broader participation. While public involvement may increase as work progresses, meaningful engagement at earlier stages has been lacking.

At the same time, the scientific community is increasingly involved through cooperation with institutions such as the Institute of Environmental Protection – National Research Institute and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The institute plays a central role in developing the final NRP document.

[37] European Commission, LIFE Programme in Poland, accessed 6 May 2026.

Structural challenges may affect implementation. Around 90% of agricultural land in Poland is privately owned,[38] making farmer engagement essential. Authorities emphasise food production priorities, indicating that without sufficient financial incentives, implementation in agricultural areas will be difficult. Forests, covering about 30% of the country, also play a key role. Approximately 80% are managed by State Forests. Despite being publicly owned, their commitment to implementing NRP measures remains uncertain.

Estimating nature restoration costs in Poland

This methodology provides a bottom-up financial estimate for a substantial part of the costs of implementing the EU Nature Restoration Law in Poland, specifically targeting the recovery of existing habitats that are not in a good condition, as defined in Article 4 (1) of the Nature Restoration Regulation. This methodology focuses on the most widespread habitat groups: wetlands; grasslands; river, lake, alluvial and riparian habitats; and forests.

All the selected projects' budgets have been denominated in euros and accounted for without currency exchange calculations. To adjust for inflation and peg everything to January 2026 levels, an online calculator[39] was used to associate each project's nominal budget with its official start month.

Most of Poland's selected projects dealt with multiple habitat types, whereas for some of the projects, habitats fell into more than one ecosystem type. There was an unclear distinction between some bundles (e.g., wet grasslands and wetlands) and a lack of information on the cost breakdown for the majority of the projects. Given this, to maintain a consistent approach the entire costs of each selected project were assigned to the single particular ecosystem type that dominated the habitat distribution in terms of area covered by the project activities. Potential overestimation of the restoration costs as a result of non-exclusion of the costs not directly attributable to habitat restoration in the original projects (e.g., the cost of demonstration activities after the restoration work is done) might be balanced out by the need to cover operation and maintenance costs in the projects' sustainability period which are typically not budgeted in the restoration projects.

Since no matching projects were determined for the forest and freshwater habitats, their restoration costs were estimated via indexation following the Benefit Transfer approach.

For the directly estimated restoration costs per km^2 of habitat, the median was calculated, while the underlying projects' cost interval was specified in parentheses. *n* stands for the number of projects selected for estimation. These parameters are missing for the values obtained through indexation.

[38] Statistics Poland, Agriculture Department, Labour Market Department, The Agricultural Census 2020, Characteristics of agricultural holdings in 2020, 32, 2022.

[39] Inflation calculator, Kalkulator inflacji, accessed 6 May 2026.

For upscaling purposes, for all ecosystem types the unit cost per km² was multiplied by the 30% share of the appropriate upper target value specified in Article 4 of Poland's NRP draft. The results are presented in table below:

Results

	Area to be restored at national level by 2030 (km²)	**Median restoration cost per km² (EUR, January 2026 prices); [range] and n=number of projects considered -- where appropriate**	**Restoration cost at national level by 2030 (area to be restored at national level*cost per km²) (EUR, January 2026 prices)**
Coastal and inland wetlands	496	308 419; [119 285 – 1 565 083]; n = 7	152 981 067
Rivers, lakes and alluvial (freshwater)	1,086	289 612	314 570 938
Grasslands	732	994 039; [419 887 – 2 899 482]; n = 3	727 475 514
Forest and woodland	1,703	297 917	507 455 163
TOTAL (by 2030)			**1 702 482 682**
TOTAL cost for the period August 2024 – July 2032			**2 411 850 466**

[a]*Since median (and not mean) was used to calculate costs of restoration for each habitat group to reduce the impact of outliers, the TOTAL sums should be considered aggregated estimates, not precise totals.*

Conclusions and recommendations

There is currently no information or official declaration indicating that Poland is on track to allocate sufficient funding for the implementation of its restoration plan. Moreover, the lack of dedicated European Union funding for the implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR) was one of the reasons cited by Poland for rejecting the proposal in June 2024.

At the same time, according to information provided by the Ministry of Climate and Environment, Poland is actively engaged at the EU level in efforts to secure adequate funding for NRR-related activities. It can be assumed that a significant funding gap exists, as there is currently no dedicated EU-level financial instrument specifically designed to support the implementation of NRR measures. This concern is further reinforced by indications that the next EU budget may not continue the LIFE programme, which has so far been an important source of funding for nature conservation and restoration.

Adequate and well-targeted biodiversity funding could play a key role in improving water management systems, particularly in the context of climate change, by promoting nature-based solutions. This includes reducing both flood and drought risks, especially in agricultural areas affected by water scarcity. Investments in wetland restoration, river-floodplain reconnection, soil moisture protection and increasing landscape water retention capacity could significantly strengthen climate resilience while also supporting biodiversity objectives.

Although the NRP has not yet been published, the ministry has acknowledged the importance of ensuring sufficient funding for biodiversity. It also recognises the financial challenges associated with implementing restoration measures. Poland has advocated for the creation of a dedicated NRR funding instrument since the early stages of the legislative process, and financing was a key topic during the Nature Directors' Meeting held under the Polish Presidency.

Wetlands in Poland

In addition, IUCN Europe will provide expert support to Poland through analyses and recommendations on key aspects of NRP development. This includes, in particular, estimating the costs of restoration measures, assessing overall funding needs, mapping available funding sources and identifying opportunities to increase financial resources.

Recommendations

- Prepare a binding national financing framework for the NRP

The government should publish, alongside the NRP, a detailed and transparent financing plan that includes: (i) full cost estimates for restoration measures, (ii) identified funding sources (EU, national, regional, private) and (iii) a clear implementation timeline. This is essential to move from political declarations to verifiable commitments.

- Close the funding gap through mainstream EU instruments

Given the absence of a dedicated EU funding stream for the Nature Restoration Regulation, Poland should prioritise integrating restoration financing into existing mechanisms – particularly the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), cohesion policy funds and climate-related instruments.

- Introduce strong economic incentives for private landowners

With the majority of agricultural land privately owned, implementation will depend on farmer participation. In the elaboration of its NRP, Poland should allocate a budget for targeted financial incentives (e.g. agri-environmental payments, compensation schemes, long-term contracts) to make restoration economically viable and reduce resistance.

- Strengthen cross-ministerial coordination

A formal coordination mechanism should be established between the Ministry of Climate and Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Infrastructure (including Polish Waters). This should include joint budgeting, shared targets and accountability mechanisms to avoid fragmented implementation.

- Ensure early and meaningful stakeholder participation

The NRP process should be opened to NGOs, local authorities and land managers at all stages – not only during formal consultations. Broader participation will improve plan quality, increase legitimacy and reduce implementation risks (and thus, additional unforeseen costs).

- Improve data quality and cost assessment methodologies

Cooperation with scientific institutions and organisations such as IUCN should be strengthened to refine restoration cost estimates, prioritise measures and map realistic funding needs.

Wieprz River

- Link biodiversity funding with climate adaptation and water management

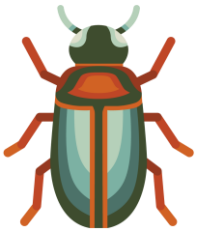
Restoration investments should be explicitly integrated into national strategies on drought prevention, flood risk management and climate resilience. This will unlock additional funding streams and strengthen the economic case for nature-based solutions.

- Advocate for a dedicated EU-level restoration funding instrument

Poland should continue efforts at the EU level to establish a specific financial mechanism for NRR implementation, while ensuring that delays in such a mechanism do not stall national progress.

- Establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms

Clear indicators, regular public reporting and independent oversight should be introduced to track funding allocation and effectiveness to ensure that commitments translate into measurable restoration outcomes. In this context, the necessary measures should be explicitly budgeted during the NRP planning process.



Main findings and joint recommendations

In order to provide a basis for the calculation of restoration costs, we analysed the process of the development of the National Restoration Plans and restoration projects implemented to date. Several gaps became apparent during this analysis. Below are our recommendations to close the identified gaps:

Reliance on EU funding for nature restoration and conservation

There is limited information about the degree to which each Member State relies on EU funding for nature conservation and restoration activities (and the exact share of EU vs national public funding for nature). Several Member States included in this research have publicly or informally raised concerns about the availability of funding for restoration, especially since no concrete information has been provided about available financing.[40]

Recommendations:

The revamped MFF structure and the renationalisation of the planning of part of the EU budget is an opportunity for Member States to maximise the synergies between their National Restoration Plans and their National and Regional Partnership Plans. This is an opportunity for them to influence budget negotiations to meet their needs and make sure that National Restoration Plans are appropriately funded through the EU budget.

Lack of up-to-date data on habitat status, based on national habitat reporting under the Habitats Directive and other sources of publicly availability of data

Delays in reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive were observed in several countries. As a result much data is absent or outdated, which directly harms the preparation of National Restoration Plans and causes delays in identifying areas that need to be restored. Another issue that is especially worrying is the lack of knowledge about the status of habitats. Estonia and especially Croatia have large areas of habitats that fall under the 'unknown' status category, making it very difficult to properly assess the correct size of habitats that are in need of restoration. This has a direct impact on the National Restoration Plans which might, in case large areas of habitats are not included, pose a significant risk to achieving the goals of the Nature Restoration Regulation and securing enough funding. Also, the level of data that is publicly available

[40] Biodiversa+, Dialogue on National Restoration Plans and knowledge gaps encountered drafting it, September 2025.

about the areas to be restored varies from one Member State to another. This could possibly lead to an uneven implementation of the NRR across the EU.

Recommendations:

The European Commission should ensure Member States comply with all EU environmental legislation and the related reporting obligations.

Funding should be secured and planned, especially through the National Restoration Plans and other instruments on the EU level to research and determine the state of the habitats in an 'unknown' condition. Pending the results of these assessments, Member States should: 1) assume a bad condition for all unknown status habitats (and plan adequate budget for this situation); 2) assess these habitats by 2028, and 3) reassess and adapt their planning accordingly once all habitats' statuses are known.

Enhanced transparency from Member States and the voluntary disclosure of information on the state of habitats is necessary. Local practitioners, scientists and environmental NGOs, whose work is instrumental for local and national restoration planning, need this information for the implementation of restoration projects.

National Restoration Plan consultation processes vary from one Member State to another

Member States are struggling to follow the timeframe provided and to finalise the preparation of their plans by September 2026. While some are in more advanced phases, having several working groups and already implemented consultation processes, others took extensive time to set up the legal background that would enable preparation of the plan since it requires coordination and joint work across different sectors. Usually, this results in short timeframes for public consultation processes. The availability of information about the process of plan preparation also varies between Member States. This raises concerns about the way the plans will be developed, undermines trust in the process and exacerbates opposition to nature restoration in general.

Recommendations:

Open and transparent consultation processes are key to ensure stakeholder buy-in and the accuracy and efficiency of restoration planning. Local stakeholders, NGOs and scientists have the best on-the-ground knowledge. They will also implement many of the restoration activities at the local level. Hence, their timely participation will support a smooth implementation of the national plans and help avoid additional costs related to unforeseen barriers.

Nature restoration and the process of the plan development should be widely promoted with available and innovative approaches. Multiple Member States have developed special websites or dedicated sections on

government websites[41,42] that are regularly updated and provide timely information to the interested public. Creating an understanding of the benefits that restored nature offers, using existing positive examples and sensitising the public to the restoration approaches can help during preparation of the plan but especially with implementation of the plan, resulting in less conflict in the field.

Uneven approaches to achieving restoration targets

There is some flexibility given to Member States for which restoration pathways they may choose to reach their restoration targets. However, prioritising cost efficiency may not always be aligned with the most pressing conservation priorities. Similarly, basing the plan mostly on existing or planned projects without concrete understanding of the restoration needs, especially beyond the timeframes of these projects, will result in low-quality plans that will not be able to deliver expected results.

Recommendations:

Member States should prioritise restoration actions in accordance with scientifically established conservation priorities, based on assessments of the state of protected and rare species and habitats and in accordance with Nature Directives. Cost efficiency and already planned projects can be an added benefit but should not be the main factors for setting priorities.

Challenges with privately owned land in National Restoration Plans

Some Member States, such as Poland, Hungary and Estonia, have a high share of privately owned land, limiting the possibility of direct state action for conservation and restoration. To combat that, plans often focus solely on state-owned land; however, that does not necessarily correspond to the national conservation priorities and the status of species and habitats. A sole focus on state-owned lands, unless fully backed by scientific consensus on conservation priorities, creates a false impression of the size of the areas in need of restoration and the financing needed to restore habitats. It also risks deepening the rift between nature conservation and private landowners, if the necessary support for private landowners is not secured.

Recommendations:

Member States need to account for restoration on privately owned land in their national plan (when required by national conservation priorities) and to allocate budget for financial incentives (tax breaks,

[41] Independent Advisory Committee on Nature Restoration, Independent Advisory Committee on Nature Restoration Recommendations Report for Government, accessed 5 May 2026.

[42] Ecologic Institute, Draft of the First National Restoration Plan, accessed 5 May 2026.

subsidies and other forms of compensation for conservation actions on their land) to landowners for restoration activities.

Taking a proactive approach, including NGOs, scientists, landowners, land users and other stakeholders would minimise conflicts and increase ownership of the restoration plan.

Lack of capacity for preparation and implementation of the plan

The nature conservation sector is one that is often forgotten when it comes to dedicating appropriate and necessary capacity. Related ministries and institutions, especially in Croatia and Hungary, are struggling with a lack of expert knowledge and administrative capacities. This will also impact the implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation requirements.

Recommendations:

When planning funding for the National Restoration Plans, Member States should allocate funds for increasing the capacities (expert and human) of relevant ministries and institutions, on all levels, to enable the implementation of the plan.

During the implementation of the plan, the responsible implementing authorities should set clear indicators, provide regular public reporting and enable independent oversight to track funding allocation and effectiveness. This would ensure that commitments translate into measurable restoration outcomes.

General recommendations for a budget that delivers for nature restoration:

Synergies between the overall Multiannual Financial Framework negotiations, particularly the National and Regional Partnership Plans and the National Restoration Plans, should be enhanced. This would also reinforce policy coherence and support simplification efforts.

Nature Restoration Regulation obligations should be embedded within the National and Regional Partnership Plans to ensure that enough funding is secured for nature restoration on the national level.

The disbursement of EU funding should be conditioned on compliance with the NRR obligations, thus enhancing the chances of effective restoration financing.

The LIFE programme should be maintained as a standalone programme that would enable continuation of the existing good practices in restoration and ensure that larger projects, especially on the cross-border and international levels, led by both institutional and non-institutional stakeholders are implemented. This contributes to improvement of nature conservation practices, especially in habitats that are shared by several Member States.

The absence of a ringfenced budget for nature restoration significantly increases the risk of not achieving nature restoration objectives set by the NRR. Therefore, 10% of the total MFF funding needs to be ringfenced for biodiversity.

Annex 1: List of projects providing data on habitat restoration

Estonia

Project	Ecosystems	Short description
LIFE PEAT Restore Funding source: EU LIFE programme + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre (+ 5 co-financers in other member states) 07.2016-03.2022, implemented by Tallinn University (+ 8 partners in other Member States) Estonian part of the area: 33.43 km^2 Estonian part of the budget: EUR 1 481 286	26.13 km^2: Degraded calcareous fen (7230), Transitional and quaking mires (7140), Active raised bogs (7110*) 7.3 km^2: Bog forests (91D0*), Fennoscandian deciduous swamp woods (9080*) Marginal area: Western taiga (9010*)	As part of the international project involving five countries, the restoration works in Estonia intended to improve the conditions of the degraded Suursoo fen in the Läänemaa Suursoo mire complex, which was strongly damaged by drainage. For hydrology restoration, a total of 173 dams and 12.4 km of peat dikes were built to block the ditch network, making it one of the largest wetlands restoration projects in Estonia.
LIFE Mires Estonia Funding source: EU LIFE programme + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre 09.2015-12.2021, implemented by Estonian Fund for Nature, University of Tartu, NGO Arheovisioon Area: 79 km^2 Project budget: EUR 3 726 047	0.79 km^2: Active raised bogs (7110*), Bog woodland (91D0*), and Fennoscandian deciduous swamp woods (9080*), transition mires and quaking bogs (7140), Alkaline fens (7230) Marginal/concomitant area: Fennoscandian herb-rich forests with Picea abies (9050), and Western taiga (9010*), Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds (3160), Water courses of plain to montane levels with Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation (3260), Northern boreal alluvial meadows (6450)	The project aimed to restore the natural water regime in six areas damaged by drainage: Laukasoo, Ohepalu, Sirtsi, Tudusoo, Feodorisoo and Soosaare. The restoration works, primarily closing ditches and building dikes, were supported by multinational expertise and voluntary activities. The project's importance lies not only in its vast scale, but also in comprehensive preparation and monitoring.

URBANCOWS Funding source: EU LIFE programme + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre, Pärnu Town Government, University of Tartu Pärnu College 01.2012-12.2016, implemented by Estonian Environmental Board, Pärnu Town Government, University of Tartu Area: 2.95 km^2 Project budget: EUR 1 824 230 Wetlands restoration costs: EUR 279 958 Grasslands restoration costs: EUR 271 941 Other costs' division: 25% wetlands, 75% grasslands Wetlands: EUR 598 041 Grasslands: EUR 1 226 190	2.2 km^2: Boreal Baltic coastal meadows (1630) 0.75 km^2: Coastal lagoons (1150)	The project's goal was to improve the conservation status of the coastal meadows and coastal lagoons in the Pärnu Coastal Meadow Nature Reserve Natura 2000 site. The restoration measures included clearing unwanted vegetation, introducing grazing and erecting fencing and other infrastructure. In addition, visitor infrastructure was established and management recommendations for urban coastal pastures were developed. URBANCOWS is especially valuable as a flagship project providing direct profits from nature restoration, as well as bringing extensive visibility and social benefits. For wetlands, it serves as one of the few examples of coastal lagoon restorations.
Restoring the natural water regime of Leidissoo Funding source: PlanBe – Bellwinkel Stiftung für Umwelt- und Klimaschutz + HIT Umwelt- und Naturschutz Stiftungs-GmbH 2022-2025, implemented by Estonian State Forest Management Centre + The Michael Succow Stiftung Area: 8.11 km^2 Project budget: EUR 161 852	8.11 km^2: Mires and surrounding wooded wetlands	The project tackled the problem of drainage damage on the edges of the Leidissoo mire in western Estonia. To improve water retention and reduce the drainage's harmful impact, the restoration works included closing ~100 km of ditches, building more than 500 soil dams, and removing 1.7 km of ditch embankments. The project serves as a typical, yet well-executed example of wetlands restoration in Estonia.
Restoration of Kõrsa mire Funding source: EU Horizon 2020	2.41 km^2: cut-over peatland	This project was conducted as part of the larger ongoing WaterLANDS project, with the intention of restoring cut-over peatland in Kõrsa mire,

08.2024-12.2024, implemented by University of Tartu, Estonian Fund for Nature, State Forest Centre, Praktov OÜ Area: 2.41 km^2 Project budget: EUR 90 097		Pärnu County. To provide the necessary conditions for recovery, drainage ditches were closed using peat dams. Kõrsa mire restoration is one of the latest examples of restoring cut-over peatlands in Estonia.
LIFE to alvars Funding source: EU LIFE programme + Environmental Investment Centre, University of Tartu, Estonian University of Life Sciences, Estonian Seminatural Community Conservation Association 09.2014-09.2019, implemented by Estonian Environmental Board, Estonian Seminatural Community Conservation Association, Estonian University of Life Sciences, University of Tartu Area: 25.015 km^2 Project budget: EUR 5 449 839	25.015 km^2: Nordic alvar and precambrian calcareous flatrocks (6280*)	The project aimed to restore ~2,500 ha of alvars in western Estonia, to establish necessary infrastructure for future grazing and additionally to raise awareness about alvar habitats. As a result of the project, the habitat area of alvar grasslands in favourable condition in Estonia more than doubled. The restoration works were conducted using a completely new mechanical restoration technique that has become common practice since this project. 'LIFE to alvars' is a stand-out project both in terms of scope and impact.
LIFE CONNECTING MEADOWS Funding source: EU LIFE programme + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre 12.2020-12.2025, implemented by Estonian University of Life Sciences, Estonian Seminatural Community Conservation Association, Gotland Meadow Committee, MTÜ Elurikas Eesti	2.02 km^2: Fennoscandian wooded meadows, Boreal Baltic coastal meadows, Nordic alvar and precambrian calcareous flatrocks	The project helped to restore more than 200 ha of grasslands to support biodiversity and improve the connectedness of existing wooded meadows, coastal meadows and alvars on Muhu island. In addition, efforts were made to better connect with conservationists, farmers and other stakeholders. The restoration measure used was removing bushes, trees, reeds and stumps, soon followed by grazing and mowing. The project was a success and is representative of the restoration of different Estonian seminatural habitats.

Area: 2.02 km^2 Project budget: EUR 1 373 000		
Restoring Lahemaa dry meadows Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre 07.2021-08.2022, implemented by Kolga Veis OÜ Area: 0.1307 km^2 Project budget: EUR 30 109	0.1307 km^2: Dry meadows	During the project, more than 13 ha of seminatural communities were restored in Lahemaa National Park in northern Estonia. In addition to felling trees and bushes, the meadows were rotavated and mowed, creating satisfactory growing conditions for plant species and good nesting conditions for birds. The project is characteristic of smaller-scale meadow restoration in Estonia.
Restoration of Vohilaiu alvar Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre 2020-2021, implemented by OÜ Saba ja Sõrad Area: 0.1442 km^2 Project budget: EUR 39 201	0.1442 km^2: Nordic alvar and precambrian calcareous flatrocks (6280)	The project aimed to restore 14.42 ha of alvars on Vohilaiu island, in Hiiu County. The restoration works involved the cutting of all trees and the subsequent removal of bushes and remaining wood with a chain mulcher. It is a typical example of alvar restoration in Estonia.
Restoration of wooded meadows Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre 2017, implemented by MTÜ Saaremaa Puisniidud Area: 0.28 km^2 Project budget: EUR 199 892	0.275 km^2: Fennoscandian wooded meadows 0.005 km^2: Calcium-rich meadow	The project enabled beneficial conditions for the biodiversity of seminatural communities, including threatened plant species. To elevate the value of the areas, tree and bush layers were thinned. The project exemplifies wooded meadow restoration in Estonia.
Restoration of Uue-Lõuka wooded meadow and alvar Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund + Estonian	0.0285 km^2: Fennoscandian wooded meadows	The project successfully restored 2.85 ha of wooded meadow and 1.37 ha of alvar habitat in the Merise village centre, in Koorunõmme Nature Reserve. The restoration measures, namely removing trees and mowing, led to improved

Environmental Investment Centre 07.2021-04.2023, implemented by Merise Maastikuhoolduse Mittetulundusühing Area: 0.0422 km^2 Project budget: EUR 16 483	0.0137 km^2: Nordic alvar and precambrian calcareous flatrocks (6280)	conditions for nesting birds and threatened plant species. The project serves as an example of small-scale combined restoration.
Restoration of Tuuru beachside Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre 2021, implemented by MTÜ Loodus- ja Kunstikeskus Kiideva mõis Area: 0.0292 km^2 Project budget: EUR 9 219	0.018 km^2: Dry meadow 0.0112 km^2: Nordic alvar and precambrian calcareous flatrocks (6280)	The project sought to restore seminatural communities in Väinameri Conservation Area in Lääne County and allow for subsequent habitat maintenance by grazing. The restoration was executed primarily by removing trees and bushes, flattening sod and grazing. The project is an example of smaller-scale grassland restoration.
Restoration and enabling of sustainable maintenance of Nõmmküla and Vahtraste alvars Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre 2018-2019, implemented by MTÜ Lõetsa niidud Area: 0.319 km^2 Project budget: EUR 243 000	0.319 km^2: Nordic alvar and precambrian calcareous flatrocks (6280)	The project focused on the restoration of Nõmmküla and Vahtraste alvars in Nõmmküla and Saareniidi Nature Preserves in Saare County, including early-stage post-restoration maintenance. The tree and bush layers were thinned and sheep and related infrastructure were acquired for maintenance by grazing.
LIFE HAPPYFISH Funding source: EU LIFE Programme + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre 02.2009-11.2012, implemented by MTÜ Eesti	1.0678 km^2: Northern boreal alluvial meadows (6450) + Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation (3260)	The project's main objectives were to restore and preserve valuable spawning grounds and habitats of the Emajõgi River in the Alam-Pedja Natura 2000 area and to protect and facilitate the recovery of fish species of European importance. The restoration measures were primarily removal of sediments to reconnect meanders with the

Loodushoiu Keskus, MTÜ Looduskaitseühing Kotkas, Estonian Ministry of Environment's Environmental Information Centre Area: 1.0678 km^2 Project budget: EUR 1 895 340		river, and the reintroduction of fish. The project can be commended for its scope and high quality.
LIFE HAPPYRIVER Funding source: EU LIFE Programme + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre 07.2013-12.2018, implemented by MTÜ Eesti Loodushoiu Keskus Area: 0.186 km^2 Project budget: EUR 1 365 601	0.13 km^2: Northern boreal alluvial meadows (6450) 0.056 km^2: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation (3260)	The project's objectives were to restore the natural riverbed and the alluvial meadows of the Laeva River in the Alam-Pedja Natura 2000 site, to preserve habitats and species of conservation priority and provide habitats for birds. Additionally, the project sought to create fish spawning grounds, re-introduce the asp, raise awareness about conservation and to develop international cooperation for river and river-dependent species' conservation. The primary restoration measure was removing unwanted vegetation. LIFE HAPPYRIVER is one of the most ambitious and overall successful river restoration projects in Estonia.
Restoring alluvial meadows in Alam-Pedja nature conservation area, Elva-Ilmatsalu alluvial meadow Funding source: European Regional Development Fund 04.2010-12.2014, implemented by MTÜ Looduskaitseühing Kotkas Area: 3.12 km^2 Project budget: EUR 401 852	3.12 km^2: Northern boreal alluvial meadows (6450)	This project restored alluvial meadows on the Emajõgi River, between the mouths of the Elva and Ilmatsalu rivers. The restoration was carried out on the alluvial meadows via slashing sod and removing bushes. The project is an excellent representation of large-scale alluvial meadow restoration in Estonia.
Restoration and installation of spawning grounds in Vaidva river Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund	0.005683 km^2 (435m): Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation (3260)	The project succeeded in the restoration and installation of spawning grounds on the Vaidva River in Valga County. The main restoration measure was the removal of bushes from the river shore. The project is an example of combining direct habitat restoration with restoring animal populations.

01.2013-12.2014, implemented by MTÜ Eesti Loodushoiu Keskus Area: 0.005683 km^2 Project budget: EUR 129 214		
Restoration of Tänassilma River alluvial meadows Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund + Estonian Environmental Investment Centre 03.2017-12.2018, implemented by MTÜ Luhaniit Area: 0.258 km^2 Project budget: EUR 79 445	0.258 km^2: Northern boreal alluvial meadows (6450)	The project restored an alluvial meadow on the Tänassilma River in Viljandi County. The principal restoration measure was removal of bushes. The project led to improved habitats for the flora, birds, fish and other fauna. It is a typical example of alluvial meadow restoration in Estonia.

Hungary

Project	Ecosystems	Short description
Life4Oak Forests Conservation management tools for increasing structural and compositional biodiversity in Natura2000 oak forests Funding source: LIFE programme Dates: 2017-2026 Project implementer: Ente di gestione per i Parchi e la Biodiversit-Romagna Overall area: 15.55 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 4 610 772	Forests: 91G0 Pannonic woods with Quercus petraea and Carpinus betulus, 91H0 Pannonian woods with Quercus pubescens, 91I0 Euro-Siberian steppic woods with Quercus spp, 91M0 Pannonian-Balkanic turkey oak-sessile oak forests	The LIFE4OakForests project aims to restore the structural and species diversity of EU-priority oak forests in Hungary and Italy. Oak forests are representative habitats of the biogeographical region. Key measures include the elimination of invasive tree species, protection against game damage (fencing) and increasing the amount of standing and fallen deadwood to restore natural forest structures.
'Forest, naturally!' - restoration of degraded forests in the Őrség National Park Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2016-2021 Project implementer: Őrségi National Parc Directorate Overall area: 0.26 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 1 500 737	Forests: 9130 Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests, 91G0 Pannonic woods with Quercus petraea and Carpinus betulus, 91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)	This Őrség National Park project focuses on the restoration of degraded forest stands. Restoration measures involved transforming forest structures, increasing the proportion of native tree species and the mechanical or chemical control of invasive species.
Native tree species in domestic forests – Commencement of the transformation of non-native forest stands and afforestation, nature conservation management of forests in the BNPD Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2017-2023 Project implementer: Bükk National Park Directorate Overall area: 3.5066 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 987 816	Forests: 91G0 Pannonic woods with Quercus petraea and Carpinus betulus, 91M0 Pannonian-Balkanic turkey oak-sessile oak forests, 91I0 Euro-Siberian steppic woods with Quercus spp, 91F0 Riparian mixed forests of Quercus robur, Ulmus laevis and minor, Fraxinus excelsior or angustifolia, along the great rivers, 91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)	This Bükk National Park project aimed to replace non-native forest stands and afforest them with native tree species. Non-native plantations threaten the local ecosystem's integrity. The most important measures include shifting to natural forest management, creating mixed forest structures and the systematic planting of native saplings.

Long term conservation of Pannonian grasslands and related habitats through the implementation of PAF strategic measures Funding source: LIFE programme Dates: 2019-2026 Project implementer: Herman Ottó Institute Nonprofit Ltd. Overall area: 56 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 11 409 852	Grasslands: 6260 Pannonic sand steppes, 6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae), 6440 Alluvial meadows of river valleys of the Cnidion dubii, 6510 Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis), 6520 Mountain hay meadows, 1530 Pannonic salt steppes and salt marshes, 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia), 6240 Sub-Pannonic steppic grasslands, 6250 Pannonic loess steppic grasslands	The Grassland LIFE IP project aimed for the long-term conservation and management of Pannonian grasslands. Currently, this is the most significant grassland restoration project in Hungary. Key measures include invasive species control, establishing conservation-oriented grazing and mowing regimes and developing a national grassland strategy.
Restoration of loess steppe grasslands in the Körös-Maros National Park by propagation and planting of character/specialist plant species Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2016-2021 Project implementer: Körös-Maros National Park Directorate Overall area: 1.6078 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 320 612	Grasslands: 1530 Pannonic salt steppes and salt marshes, 6250 Pannonic loess steppic grasslands	This Körös-Maros National Park project targeted the development of steppe habitats. It was selected to halt the degradation of alkaline grasslands. Primary measures include suppressing shrub encroachment, eradicating invasive species and developing the grazing infrastructure necessary for sustainable habitat management.
Old Drava Funding source: LIFE programme Dates: 2014-2019 Project implementer: Danube-Drava National Park Directorate Overall area: 1.76 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 481 975	Rivers, lakes, alluvial freshwater: 3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation, 91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae), 91F0 Riparian mixed forests of Quercus robur, Ulmus laevis and minor, Fraxinus excelsior or angustifolia, along the great rivers	The Old Drava project aimed to improve the ecological status of the Old Drava oxbow lake and restore aquatic habitats. Restoration measures focus on hydrological restoration (ensuring water supply through artificial structures) and dredging to improve habitat water retention.

Wise Drava Funding source: Life Dates: 2018-2023 Project implementer: WWF Hungary Overall area: 5.13 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 221 327	Rivers, lakes, alluvial freshwater: 6440 Alluvial meadows of river valleys of the Cnidion dubii, 91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae), 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation, 91F0 Riparian mixed forests of Quercus robur, Ulmus laevis and Ulmus minor, Fraxinus excelsior or Fraxinus angustifolia, along the great rivers (Ulmenion minoris)	The WISE Drava project aimed to improve the water balance of riverine and floodplain habitats along the Drava River and to halt groundwater level decline caused by previous river regulation. Key measures include hydrological restoration, enhancing water retention and ensuring adequate water supply for floodplain forests.
Restoration and grassland management of Felsö-Kongó meadows Funding source: LIFE programme Dates: 2007-2009 Project implementer: Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate Overall area: 5.06 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 382 921	Wetlands: 6440 Alluvial meadows of river valleys of the Cnidion dubii, 6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae), 6510 Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis)	The aim was to ensure the continuous management of grassland habitats Tapolcai-medence. Activities included a baseline *grasslands habitats in the Tapolcai-medence* survey of the area, complex rewetting activities, developing a suitable management regime and monitoring.
Complex restoration and development of the natural habitats of the Fertő region Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2016-2023 Project implementer: Fertő–Hanság National Park Directorate Overall area: 113.16 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 248 1397	Wetlands: 1530 Pannonic salt steppes and salt marshes, 6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae), 6440 Alluvial meadows of river valleys of the Cnidion dubii	This Fertő-Hanság National Park project aimed for the complex restoration and development of natural habitats in the Fertő landscape. Previously, the ecological balance of wetlands and reed beds has been disrupted. Key measures include improving water management, dredging canals and suppressing invasive vegetation.
Wetland habitat reconstructions in the Somogy and Zala counties of the Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund	Wetlands: 6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae), 7230 Alkaline fens, 91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and	The Balaton-felvidéki National Park wetland reconstruction project covers areas in Somogy and Zala counties. The goal was to rehabilitate degraded wetlands to increase biodiversity. The

Dates: 2017-2023 Project implementer: Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate Overall area: 8.24 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 1 308 548	Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)	main measures include building water supply systems, dredging and active management of aquatic vegetation.
Restoration of wetlands in the Hortobágy and Nagykunság nature conservation areas for nature conservation purposes Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2016-2022 Project implementer: Hortobágy National Park Directorate Overall area: 12.1726 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 3 156 493	Wetlands: 1530 Pannonic salt steppes and salt marshes, 3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation, 6440 Alluvial meadows of river valleys of the Cnidion dubii, 6250 Pannonic loess steppic grasslands	The Hortobágy National Park wetland project addressed water shortages in alkaline lakes and marshes. Key measures include hydrological restoration, constructing water retention structures and improving the natural water cycle at 21 project sites. Results: water cover increased on nearly 7,600 hectares in the spring of 2023, of which nearly 1,800 hectares remained by the summer.
Wetland restoration and enabling the possibility of traditional floodplain managment in the area of the Nagy-tó of Tiszaalpár Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2016-2018 Project implementer: Kiskunság National Park Directorate Overall area: 1.551945 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 1 537 914	Wetlands and grasslands: 3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation, 1530 Pannonic salt steppes and salt marshes, 6440 Alluvial meadows of river valleys of the Cnidion dubii	The reconstruction of the Tiszaalpár Great Lake (Kiskunság National Park) aimed to restore wetland habitats and enable traditional *fok* water management. Key measures include dredging, renovating water supply structures and restoring the aquatic ecosystem.
Habitat reconstruction of the Soltszentimre saline plain, phase II Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2013-2015 Project implementer: Kiskunság National Park Directorate Overall area: 14.91643 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 1 062 557	Wetlands and grasslands: 1530 Pannonic salt steppes and salt marshes, 6250 Pannonic loess steppic grasslands	Phase II of the Soltszentimre alkaline steppe rehabilitation aimed to improve the ecological status of the Kiskunság region's alkaline habitats. The most important measures include the introduction of a restorative grazing system and stabilising the area's water balance.
Habitat protection and restoration in the Kis-Balaton Basin and Nyugat-Külső-Somogy	Wetlands, grasslands and forests: 3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation,	This Kis-Balaton and West Somogy project aimed for habitat protection and restoration of the Kis-Balaton as a Ramsar site of international

Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2016-2021 Project implementer: Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate Overall area: 7.61 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 1 604 194	6260 Pannonic sand steppes, 6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae), 6440 Alluvial meadows of river valleys of the Cnidion dubii, 7210 Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae, 7230 Alkaline fens, 91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)	importance. Key measures include improving water retention, invasive species control and conservation-led grassland management.
Complex habitat development in the Zemplén region Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2016-2023 Project implementer: Aggtelek National Park Directorate Overall area: 13.16 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 3 558 752	Wetlands, grasslands and forests:, 6520 Mountain hay meadows, 91M0 Pannonian-Balkanic turkey oak- sessile oak forests, 9130 Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests, 6240 Sub-pannonic steppic grasslands, 6190 Rupicolous pannonic grasslands (Stipo-Festucetalia pallentis), 6230 Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)	The Aggtelek National Park project targeted the management of forests and grasslands threatened by shrub encroachment. It also aimed to halt species loss resulting from natural succession. Main measures include shrub clearing, invasive species suppression and developing infrastructure for nature-friendly forest management.
Habitat rehabilitation of the Kis-Tisza in Tiszakürt and water replenishment of the Bereg and Nyírség bogs Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2016-2022 Project implementer: Hortobágy National Park Directorate Overall area: 0.755699 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 3 549 487	Wetlands, Rivers, lakes, alluvial freshwater: 91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae), 7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs, 7230 Alkaline fens, 3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation, 6440 Alluvial meadows of river valleys of the Cnidion dubii, 91F0 Riparian mixed forests of Quercus robur, Ulmus laevis and minor,	This project focused on water supply for the Tiszakürt Little-Tisza and the mires of Bereg and Nyírség. It was selected due to the drastic drying out of these rare mires. Key measures include hydrological restoration (modernising water supply systems), dredging and establishing natural, seasonal water-cover cycles.

	Fraxinus excelsior or angustifolia, along the great rivers	
Nature conservation reconstruction of steppe oak forests and gallery forests in the operational area of the Hortobágy National Park Directorate Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2016 -2022 Project implementer: Hortobágyi Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság Overall area: 4.21619 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 1 658 711	Grasslands and forests: 91G0 Pannonic woods with Quercus petraea and Carpinus betulus, 91I0 Euro-Siberian steppic woods with Quercus spp, 6250 Pannonic loess steppic grasslands, 91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)	The restoration of Hortobágy steppe oaks and soft-wood groves aimed to preserve forest-steppe habitats. These rare forest types are highly vulnerable. Key measures include nature conservation focused forest management, replanting native species and removing invasive woody plants.
Complex habitat reconstruction in the Kígyósi Puszta Funding source: EU Cohesion Fund Dates: 2016-2020 Project implementer: Körös-Maros National Park Directorate Overall area: 22.51 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 1 075 843	Wetlands and grasslands: 1530 Pannonic salt steppes and salt marshes, 6250 Pannonic loess steppic grasslands	This Körös-Maros National Park project focused on protecting steppe habitats and associated species. Intensive land use threatens the integrity of these grasslands. Main measures include conservation-oriented land management and building infrastructure to support biodiversity-friendly farming.
Multilevel and multisite complex restoration of key ecosystem services of the calcareous sand forest steppe habitat OAKEY Life Funding source: LIFE programme Dates: 2017-2022 Project implementer: KEFAG Ltd. Overall area: 16.28 km^2 Overall budget: EUR 2 766 641	Grasslands and forests: 91I0 Euro-Siberian steppic woods with Quercus spp, 91N0 Pannonic inland sand dune thicket (Junipero-Populetum albae), 40A0 Subcontinental peri-Pannonic scrub, 6260 Pannonic sand steppes	The OAKEYLIFE project aimed to restore sandy oak forests and Pannonian grasslands in the Kiskunság. Key measures include the eradication of invasive species, native forest planting and restoring the mosaic pattern of forests and grasslands.

Latvia

Project	Ecosystems	Short description of activities related to restoration
'Restoration of biotopes and species habitats', Cohesion Fund, state budget, 17.02.2021. – 31.12.2023., coordinated by the Nature Conservation Agency Overall area: ~ 1700 ha Overall budget: EUR 3 529 411	Grasslands and other pastoral ecosystems (different complexes of grassland and scrub habitats (including 6530*, 5130), habitats of protected species in grasslands), 469.04 ha Forests (forest habitats 9060, Eastern pasqueflower habitats in forests), 201.73 ha Wetlands, coastal & inland (bog and fen, forest and heath and scrub habitats 7160, 7230, 7110*, 7140, 91D0*, 4010), 416.24 ha Rivers, lakes, alluvial and riparian ecosystems (freshwater habitats 3150, 3260), 81.98 ha other ecosystems (not covered by the report)	The project was implemented as part of the Cohesion Policy's national operational programme 'Growth and Employment', in order to contribute to the fulfilment of the specific objective 'Measures for restoring the favourable protection status of habitats and species'. A vast array of activities was carried out at 30 Natura 2000 sites: 20 Annex I habitat types of the Habitats Directive, at least eight protected species habitats (birds, insects and flowering plants), and 13 protected tree-lined alleys. While the measures were directly implemented in a little over 1,700 ha, the positively impacted area is estimated to be at least 13,800 ha. The project focused not only on improving the protection status of habitats and species, but also advancing technical expertise and gathering lessons learned. Maintenance plans were produced for the restored areas and monitoring is being carried out.
GrassLIFE2, LIFE Programme, Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia, 01.01.2023. – 31.12.2028., coordinated by the Latvian Fund for Nature Overall area: 1,260 ha Overall budget: EUR 7 514 242	Grasslands and other pastoral ecosystems (grassland and coastal habitats 6120*, 6270*, 6210*, 6230*, 1630* and others), 1,260 ha	Successfully continuing the *GrassLIFE* project, the project contributes to the restoration of grassland habitats in 11 Natura 2000 sites and promotes their connectivity. Before the restoration began site inventorisation was conducted, restoration plans prepared and access road maintenance carried out. The key restoration measures for farms participating in the project are sawing of shrubs, mowing and grazing of excess biomass, removal of invasive species, enrichment of sites with native grassland seeds and the restoration of the hydrological regime. Grazing infrastructure has been installed in the farms and cattle purchased, contributing to maintenance of the restoration results. Grazing infrastructure has

		also been installed in other sites, where mobile herds established within the project are restoring and maintaining grassland habitats. In some areas, volunteering activities are carried out for restoration. After the restoration commences, monitoring of vegetation, habitats, soil nutrients and ecosystem services is conducted.
WoodMeadowLIFE, LIFE Programme, Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia, 01.11.2021. – 31.12.2027., coordinated by the Estonian Environmental Board Overall area: 200 ha (Latvia) Overall budget: EUR 6 697 642 EUR (EUR 2 179 408 for Latvia)	Grasslands and other pastoral ecosystems (grassland habitat 6530*), 200 ha	The project focuses on the restoration of wooded meadows in eight Natura 2000 sites in Latvia, crucial for many flowering plant, insect and bird species. At first, restoration plans were prepared and road access improved. The key restoration measures in project sites are the clearing of excess trees and bushes, mulching of stumps and roots, removal of invasive species, seed dispersal for grassland enrichment and the installation of bat houses and beetle nest boxes. Complimentary volunteer restoration activities are organised. After the measures are implemented, vegetation and insects are monitored.
LIFE AQPOM, LIFE Programme, Latvian Environmental Protection Fund, 01.08.2016. – 30.09.2021., coordinated by Latvian Fund for Nature Overall area: 290 ha Overall budget: EUR 2 149 745	Grasslands and other pastoral ecosystems (grassland habitat 6530*, 6270*, 6410), 26 ha Rivers, lakes, alluvial and riparian ecosystems (grassland habitat 6450 and adjacent), 61 ha and 203 ha adjacent	The restoration of breeding and feeding sites of the lesser spotted eagle was at the centre of the project. While the breeding site activities mainly revolved around the installation of artificial nest platforms and protected area designation in forests, the feeding site activities were carried out in wooded meadow and floodplain meadow habitats at two Natura 2000 sites. Shrubs and small trees were removed, grazing infrastructure installed, cattle purchased and the grasslands grazed. Moreover, the hydrological regime was restored in the floodplain by closing ditches and creating artificial wetlands. Before the works began, restoration plans were developed and after vegetation was monitored, in addition to bird monitoring.

HYDROPLAN, LIFE Programme, Latvian Environmental Protection Fund, 01.09.2011 – 31.08.2019, coordinated by the Nature Conservation Agency Overall area: 1,690 ha Overall budget: EUR 1 083 074	Wetlands, coastal & inland (bog and forest habitats 7110*, 91D0*, 9080 and adjacent (including 91E0*, 9010*, 9020*, 7120, 7140, 7210, 7230, 6450)), 1,044 ha and 561 ha adjacent Rivers, lakes, alluvial and riparian ecosystems (grassland habitat 6450 and adjacent (6510)), breeding habitats of the corn crake, feeding areas for the lesser spotted eagle), 85 ha	Three sites at the Ķemeri National Park were restored during the project, focusing on floodplain meadow, raised bog, bog woodland and swamp forest habitats. Since the main aim of the activities was to restore the hydrological regime at the sites, extensive preparatory work was conducted – an inventory of the drainage system and habitats was produced, remote sensing data gathered, hydrology modelled, environmental impact assessment made, hydrological restoration programmes prepared and land acquired. The restoration measures included ditch blocking, restoration of meanders of a 5.5 km long stretch of a river and thus the improvement of the functionality of the floodplain. Moreover, to maintain the floodplain grasslands, grazing infrastructure was installed and cattle and horses brought in from an adjacent plot that were permanently stationed there during a previous LIFE project. Grasslands were primarily restored with an aim to support such bird species as the corn crake and the lesser spotted eagle.
DVIETE, LIFE Programme, Latvian Environmental Protection Fund, 01.10.2010. – 30.09.2015, coordinated by the Latvian Fund for Nature Overall area: ~ 160 ha Overall budget: EUR 1 170 298	Rivers, lakes, alluvial and riparian ecosystems (restored grassland habitat 6100 with inclusions of 6450, 6510, 6270*), ~ 160 ha	A 1.8 km long section of the Dviete River and the floodplains that surround it were restored within the project. They serve as a habitat for such bird species as the corn crake. At first, data on vegetation and hydrology was gathered through field surveys and remote sensing, hydrological modelling was conducted, a technical project prepared and land renting agreements secured. Then, restoration measures were implemented, such as restoring the meanders of the section of the river, limiting the overgrowth by cutting bushes and excess trees and mulching the stumps. Volunteers took part in some of the restoration activities. Further, enclosures were set up and grazing animals purchased and introduced. Some areas were both cleared

		from overgrowth and grazed, but the removal of bushes and trees also took place in adjacent areas where infrastructure was set up and grazing had taken place in a previous project. After the measures were implemented, the groundwater level was monitored.
LIFE COASTLAKE, LIFE Programme, Latvian Environmental Protection Fund, 01.09.2013 – 30.04.2018, coordinated by the Latvian Fund for Nature Overall area: 1,700 ha Overall budget: EUR 1 710 641	Rivers, lakes, alluvial and riparian ecosystems (Eurasian bittern habitats in lakes, such as 3140), 1,700 ha	Sections of two lagoon-type coastal lakes – Engure and Pape – were restored in order to improve the breeding and feeding habitats for such bird species as the Eurasian bittern. In both lakes vast, monotone vegetation patches were fragmented by cutting reeds and bushes, and shallow pools and channels (more than 6 km in length) were constructed by removing vegetation and sediments, thus improving the water circulation in the lakes and the condition of dried-up reed islands. Before the work began, remote sensing data was gathered for assessing the vegetation coverage and spatial structure of the habitat and profiling the lakebed, waterflows modelled and technical projects prepared. Whereas after, water quality and sediments were analysed and vegetation monitored.

Poland

Project	Ecosystems	Short description
Recovery of wet grassland wader populations in Poland through creation of large-scale conservation areas LIFE, 2022-2027 PTOP Overall area: 78.05 km^2 Overall budget EUR 11 272 761 in January 2026 prices	Wetlands	The project aimed to improve the conservation status of the wet grassland wader populations in six Natura 2000 areas where the overall rewetting area was three times as large as the meadows restoration area, hence the project was attributed to wetlands, not grasslands. The project has been selected due to extensive re-wetting which is the basic approach to wetland restoration in Poland demanding upscaling. Here, re-wetting here was combined with other supportive measures such as grazing. Additionally, the project sites are located in different parts of northern Poland, rendering the project emblematic in terms of implemented re-wetting activities and costs of their implementation. Clear indicators based on flagship waders' population characteristics increase the project demonstration and upscaling potential.
Wetlands conservation and restoration in Puszcza Kampinoska Natura 2000 site LIFE, 2013-2019 Kampinoski NP Overall area: 57 km^2 Overall budget EUR 6 799 245 in January 2026 prices	Wetlands 6410, 6510, 9170, 91E0	The project aimed to restore and maintain wetland habitats at Puszcza Kampinoska via permanently increasing the moisture content of the extensive human-transformed peatlands around the core wetland habitats of Puszcza Kampinoska, a suburban National Park near Warsaw. The project has been selected due to the substantial scale of standard re-wetting activities that facilitate the coexistence of wildlife conservation and human activity (e.g., biodiversity-oriented recreation).
Protection of valuable natural habitats in Ponidzie LIFE, 2014-2018. Świętokrzyskie voivodship Overall area: 0.63 km^2 Overall budget EUR 1 823 484 in January 2026 prices	Grasslands 6120, 1340, 6210, 91I0,	The project aimed to restore and improve the conservation status of grassland habitats in the Ponidzie region, which has essential importance for biodiversity. It was focused on Annex I priority grassland habitats, i.e. xerotherm turfs, thermophilic inland sand turfs and inland halophilic salty meadows, pastures and reeds. The project has been selected as one of sparse

		projects in Poland stipulating restoration of predominantly dry grassland habitats on mineral soils.
Conservation and restoration of alkaline fens (code 7230) in the young-glacial landscape of northern Poland LIFE, 2012-2018 Naturalists' Club Overall area: 6.5 km^2 Overall budget EUR 2 871 031 in January 2026 prices	Wetlands 7230 Alkaline fens	The two interconnected projects were focused on the protection of alkaline fens in Natura 2000 sites located throughout Poland (divided into two parts). These twin projects were to prevent degradation of the alkaline fens and to achieve and/or maintain their favourable conservation status. The projects were selected for improving conservation prospects for the rare and valuable type of wetlands demanding specific approach to restoration. The projects cover sites located in a representative fashion throughout the entire country.
Conservation of alkaline fens (7230) in southern Poland LIFE, 2014-2018 Naturalists' Club Overall area: 6.5 km^2 Overall budget EUR 1 584 148 in January 2026 prices		
Renaturalisation of inland delta of Nida River LIFE, 2019-2025 Świętokrzyskie voivodship Overall area: 20 km^2 Overall budget EUR 8 397 740 in January 2026 prices	Grasslands 3150, 6210, 6510	The project was aimed at contributing to the restoration of grassland ecosystems and a mosaic of predominantly grassland habitats and to improving the conservation status of these habitats' characteristic species. The project was selected as a rare example of grassland conservation projects in Poland predominantly covering lowland grasslands on dry mineral soils (e.g., through introducing grazing management).
Multi-stakeholder Landscape and Technical Innovation leading to Peatland Ecosystem Restoration LIFE, 2021-2016 NABU, OTOP-BirdLife Poland and Naturalists' Club in Poland Overall area: 2.52 km^2 Overall budget EUR 777 216 in January 2026 prices	Wetlands 7110, 7120, 7230, 91D0	The Polish section of the international project aimed to implement re-wetting activities in the degraded mountain raised bogs at Orawsko-Nowotarskie basin . The project has been selected because of its specific model sites and potential for upscaling in the southern part of the country.

Conservation of black grouse as umbrella species for valuable habitats of the Orawsko-Nowotarskie Peat Bogs LIFE, 2016-2021 OTOP-BirdLife Poland Overall area: 3 km^2 Overall budget EUR 2 260 347 in January 2026 prices	Wetlands	The project aimed to stop the decline in the Orawsko-Nowotarskie peat bogs and to support one of the largest Black Grouse populations in the country. The reason for selection was that standard active protection measures (i.e., re-wetting) were applied for the conservation of one of the largest raised bog complexes in Poland with a clear indicator – Black Grouse population status.
The integrated conservation of non-forest natural habitat on military area in Natura 2000 site LIFE, 2013-2017 Rejonowy Zarząd Infrastruktury w Krakowie Overall area: 3.75 km^2 Overall budget EUR 3 727 647 in January 2026 prices	Grasslands 6120, 2330	The project's overall objectives were to test, implement and disseminate restoration and active conservation measures for two non-forest sandy grassland habitats ('Xeric sand calcareous grasslands' and 'Inland dunes with open Corynephorus and Agrostis grasslands') of the Pustynia Błędowska, a disused military area within the EU's Natura 2000 network. Specifically, the project aimed to restore the target sandy habitats to their conservation status as recorded in 1958. The project has been selected due to providing an emblematic example of restoration of xeric and aeolic grassland habitats.
The integrated conservation of non-forest natural habitat on military area in Natura 2000 site EU Cohesive Funds/POIiŚ, 2017-2022 OTOP-BirdLife Poland Overall area: 2.62 km^2 Overall budget EUR 1 063 686 in January 2026 prices	Wetlands	The project was aimed to re-wet degraded fen mires in the east of Poland which are minor habitats of the globally endangered Aquatic Warbler. The main reason for selection of the project was the large-scale re-wetting activities of the complete life cycle (including the site selection, project design document development, construction works) implemented on the privately owned lands with multiple owners and with the potential for upscaling,

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or CINEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.


CEE
Bankwatch
Network
euronatur