Eurosite Working Group on Nature Finance & Private Land Conservation

Terms of Reference

In 2025, we started a new Eurosite working group aimed at fostering the involvement of private subjects in both nature protection and nature finance. The working group is intended to support the members and partners of Eurosite. The aim of the working group is to exchange knowledge on private land conservation initiatives as well as innovative, scalable and sustainable financial mechanisms to counter the twin crises of biodiversity loss and global warming.

1. Introduction

It has become common knowledge that the global economy is built on nature. The World Economic Forum estimates that more than 50% of the world's GDP is moderately or highly dependent on nature and the services it provides (World Economic Forum, 2020). Most ecosystem services are enabled by biodiversity, making it a key part of a well-functioning economy. At the same time, we are experiencing biodiversity loss at an unprecedented pace. We have seen a 69% decline on average in species populations since 1970 (World Wildlife Fund, 2022) and a loss of one sixth of all global forests in the past century (Our World in Data, 2024), driving global ecosystems to irreversible tipping points. Together with the climate breakdown, biodiversity loss is the major driver of global ecosystem degradation.

The response to such trends culminated in the historic UN Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in 2022. There, the parties to the UN Convention on Biodiversity agreed to scale biodiversity finance, mobilising at least $200b per year by 2030 against an estimated $700+ billion gap.

A significant part of it is expected to come from private finance. Virtually every corporate sustainability reporting standard has followed suit in efforts to integrate nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities into their disclosure frameworks. The two most notable ones are the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) and the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD).

The EU has anticipated many of the targets of the GBF with its EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. There, it has committed to tackling biodiversity loss and restoring ecosystems through public and private investments with at least €20 billion a year being unlocked for nature. As part of the strategy, the EU has adopted the Nature Restoration Law, which compels member states to restore at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030 and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

Further to providing funds, private subjects may engage in "private land protection". This has proven to be a very effective way to protect valuable land for nature (as well as for sustainable agriculture and forestry). This is also acknowledged in the EU Biodiversity Strategy where private land conservation is considered a key approach to deliver the 30x30 target.

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2. The Working Group's purpose

- To foster the development of a European community of practice in the field of private land conservation and nature finance.
- To facilitate European and international exchange on private land conservation as well as innovative, scalable and sustainable financial mechanisms to counter the twin crises of biodiversity loss and global warming.
- To host potential thematic Task Forces, e.g. on Nature/Biodiversity Credits, tax incentives, land stewardship, Payment for Ecosystem Services schemes and their potential development within the EU and in the broader international market.
- To facilitate the creation of shared policy positions on private land conservation and nature finance.
- To catalyse innovation in nature finance and support incentives for the private sector to invest in nature restoration in Europe.
- To provide the link between land managers and conservation finance sectors, facilitate the flow of finance to the land restoration projects.
- To support the implementation of the European Roadmap to Nature Credits, advocate for high-Integrity nature finance.
- To support the planning and implementation of private land conservation and nature finance related Eurosite events.
- To develop and support partnerships between Eurosite and relevant partners from the private land conservation and nature finance sectors.
- To serve as an informal space to share ideas and learn from each other.
- To build a network to amplify the learnings from the WG to a broader public and facilitate knowledge exchange among practitioners in the field.

3. Lead and organisation of the Working Group

The working group will be co-chaired by Angelo Salsi for the private land conservation aspects and David Álvarez García for the nature finance part.

Angelo joined the staff of the European Commission in 1994, and has focused there on the conservation of nature, environment and climate for the past 29 years. He has been associated with the EC's LIFE Program since the start of his career, and has deep experience in the financing of environmental programmes across the European Union. Angelo retired in October 2022 from his position a Head of the department 'Natural resource, climate, sustainable blue economy and clean energy' in the European Commission executive agency.

David has over 20 years of experience promoting the integration of biodiversity and natural capital into finance, business and policy decision-making. As the founder and CEO of Ecoacsa and participating in many other world-focused organisations, he leads multidisciplinary work on biodiversity strategy development, ecosystem services valuation and natural capital accounting, nature finance and the creation of innovative frameworks for measuring, reporting, and verifying (MRV) impacts and dependencies on nature.

The working group will function similarly to other Eurosite working groups for which operating procedures are in place. The working group will meet four times per year. The Eurosite Secretariat will provide technical facilitation of the working group, in conjunction with Xarxa per a la conservació de la Natura (XCN). The meetings will be held online, conveying in person whenever possible, linked to relevant events.

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The working group will work on the basis of annual Work Plans drafted in a collaborative process and approved at the beginning of each year.

The initial design of the working group, its purpose and ways of working were discussed during the first kick-off meeting (in November 2025), with invited representatives of key organisations in the sectors of nature finance and private land conservation. The list of the organisations represented in this core group is included below. The group will be open for new members after the initial design phase is finished.

Organisations represented in the core group designing the WG (in alphabetical order):
Catalunya la Pedrera Foundation, Conservation Finance Network, ECOACSA, Eurosite, European Landowners' Organization, Fundación Biodiversidad, International Land Conservation Network, Lyme Timber, NABU, Natuurpunt, Northern Pennines AONB, RELEX Foundation, Renew Earth, rePlanet, Sustainable Land Management, XCN.

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