



Green Deal Projects Support Office
Working Group Report

Climate Change and Biodiversity



Reporting period
December 2022 – July 2024

January 2025

Research and
Innovation

Working Group Report: Climate Change and Biodiversity

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Working Group Report:
**Climate Change
and Biodiversity**

January 2025

Green Deal Projects Support Office

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The Green Deal Projects Support Office is operated for the European Commission
– DG RTD by **Ecorys** and **Ricardo**

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About the Green Deal Projects Support Office

The Green Deal Projects Support Office has been developed to facilitate coordination between projects funded under the Horizon 2020 Green Deal Call (GDC) and maximise their positive impact in the longer term. The Green Deal Projects Support Office will operate until November 2026 and the key activities will include supporting Green Deal projects in effective

collaboration, provide networking and knowledge exchange opportunities to develop synergies, and help projects boost communication efforts of their results. The Green Deal Projects Support Office will support networking, knowledge exchange and common capacity building activities through 5 working groups:



For more information on the Green Deal Projects Support Office,
please contact: support@greendealprojects.eu

1 Introduction & Working Group Overview

1.1 The Green Deal Projects Support Office Working Groups: structure and governance

The Green Deal Projects Support Office (GDSO) was set up to facilitate coordination between projects funded under the Horizon 2020 Green Deal Call (GDC) and maximise their positive impact in the longer term. The European Commission, through this call, has funded 73 projects to support the realisation of the [European Green Deal](#) and accelerate a just and sustainable transition to a climate-neutral Europe by 2050.

The GDSO supports networking, knowledge exchange and common capacity building activities through five thematic Working Groups (WGs): Climate Change and Biodiversity; Clean Energy; Urban Environment and Mobility; Food and Health; and Knowledge and Citizens.

Each WG is led by one or more facilitators from the GDSO. These facilitators are tasked with organising the bi-annual meetings of each WG, keeping up to date with the progress of the projects and their collaboration plans, participating in events, and other tasks.

Every WG has a defined Action Plan, which is a living document that aims to provide guidance to the WG members to develop synergies between their projects through the implementation of actions in various areas. These include communication, dissemination, exploitation and policy feedback.

This report provides an overview of the activities of the [Climate Change and Biodiversity WG](#) from **December 2022 to July 2024**, and an update on the implementation of its Action Plan.

1.2 Working Group Synopsis & Thematic Focus

[The Climate Change and Biodiversity WG](#) included 17 projects from four different GDC topics that addressed four different, though interconnected, themes, i.e., wildfire management and prevention; restoring biodiversity of natural ecosystems (including coastal and water landscapes and forests); information-driven climate adaptation pathways; and climate adaptation at the regional level. The projects of the WG aimed to address the following four goals:

- Develop end-user products and services for all stakeholders and citizens to support climate adaptation and mitigation;
- Develop climate-resilient innovation packages for EU regions;
- Restore biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- Prevent and fight against extreme wildfires by integrating and demonstrating innovative solutions.








17 Projects

Aiming to reduce the impact of climate change and exploring how we adapt the way we live and work to the changes that have already occurred.



The WG includes five Research and Innovation Actions (RIA), 10 Innovation Actions (IA) and two Coordination and Support Actions (CSA).¹

The projects of the WG were clustered according to their topics, and five clusters were identified: climate change adaptation pathways, forest fires, nature restoration, citizen science, and initiatives related to climate action. The main objectives of these clusters were to develop tools, methodologies and solutions to address climate risks and climate change, biodiversity degradation and forest fires.

| Logo | Project Name | Start Date | End Date |
|---|--|------------|------------|
|  | ARSINOE – Climate resilient-regions through systemic solutions and innovations | 01/10/2021 | 30/09/2025 |
|  | cityCLIM – Next generation city climate services using advanced weather models and emerging data sources | 01/10/2021 | 30/09/2024 |
|  | FIRE-RES – Innovative technologies and socio-ecological-economic solutions for fire resilient territories in Europe | 01/12/2021 | 30/11/2025 |
|  | Firelogue – Cross-sector dialogue for wildfire risk management | 01/11/2021 | 31/10/2025 |
|  | I-CISK – Innovating climate services through integrating scientific and local knowledge | 01/11/2021 | 31/10/2025 |
|  | IMPETUS – Dynamic information management approach for the implementation of climate resilient adaptation packages in European regions | 01/10/2021 | 30/09/2025 |
|  | LOCALISED – Localised decarbonisation pathways for citizens, local administrations and businesses to inform mitigation and adaptation action | 01/10/2021 | 30/09/2025 |

¹ RIA aim to establish new knowledge or explore a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution, whereas IA aim to produce plans or designs for new or improved products, processes or services, including prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication. CSA have the goal of improving cooperation among EU and associated countries to strengthen the European Research Area including, for example, standardisation, dissemination, awareness-raising, communication and networking activities, policy dialogues, and mutual learning or studies (European Research Executive Agency, n.d.).

| Logo | Project Name | Start Date | End Date |
|---|--|------------|------------|
|  | <u>MERLIN</u> – Mainstreaming ecological restoration of freshwater-related ecosystems in a landscape context: innovation, upscaling and transformation | 01/10/2021 | 30/09/2025 |
|  | <u>REACHOUT</u> – Resilience in Europe through activating city hubs reaching out to users with triple-A climate adaptation tools | 01/10/2021 | 30/09/2025 |
|  | <u>REGILIENCE</u> – Resilience strategies for regions | 01/11/2021 | 30/09/2024 |
|  | <u>REST-COAST</u> – Large scale restoration of coastal ecosystems through rivers to sea connectivity | 01/10/2021 | 30/11/2025 |
|  | <u>Rethink Action</u> – Cross-sectoral planning decision-making platform to foster climate Action | 01/10/2021 | 31/10/2025 |
|  | <u>SILVANUS</u> – Integrated Technological and Information Platform for wildfire management | 01/10/2021 | 31/10/2025 |
|  | <u>SUPERB</u> – Systemic solutions for upscaling urgent ecosystem restoration for forest related biodiversity and ecosystem services | 01/12/2021 | 30/09/2025 |
|  | <u>TransformAr</u> – Accelerating and upscaling transformational adaptation in Europe: demonstration of water-related innovation packages | 01/10/2021 | 30/09/2025 |
|  | <u>TREEADS</u> – A holistic fire management ecosystem for prevention, detection and restoration of environmental disasters | 01/12/2021 | 30/09/2025 |
|  | <u>WaterLANDS</u> – Water-based solutions for carbon storage, people and wilderness | 01/12/2021 | 30/11/2026 |

2 Main Activities and Achievements

2.1 Action Plan and Implementation Summary

At their inception, each WG developed an Action Plan outlining the group's objectives and the tasks that they wished to achieve. Some of the tasks included timelines and detailed sub-tasks, whereas others were more general and will be defined further at later stages. The Action Plans are living documents that are revised several times throughout the lifespan of the GDSO based on their progress, with changes made to tasks, timelines and assigning responsibilities.

Five WG meetings have taken place:

- 1st WG meeting: 8 June 2022
- 2nd WG meeting: 18 November 2022
- 3rd WG meeting: 2 May 2023
- 4th WG meeting: 15 November 2023
- 5th WG meeting: 24 April 2024.

Several areas of interest were identified for the WG at its inception, and the first Action Plan laid out six focus areas, which were broken down into 14 actions.

Following developments and progress within the group, during the 4th WG meeting in November 2023, the Action Plan was simplified, with some actions being merged, and others removed entirely.

The six focus areas (including their respective actions) that the projects progressing on are:

1. Mapping of commonalities

- 1.1. Mapping common challenges
- 1.2. Mapping project partners by expertise to facilitate connections.

2. Case studies

- 2.1. Mapping case studies
- 2.2. Mapping stakeholders by type
- 2.3. Coordinating consultations of common stakeholders to avoid stakeholder fatigue
- 2.4. Workshops on best practices.

3. Subjects for knowledge sharing activities

- 3.1. Sharing methodological approaches
- 3.2. Thematic discussions.

4. Organisation/participation in events

- 4.1. Joint webinars and open seminars involving WG members and thematic experts
- 4.2. Presentation at external events of common interest.

5. Capacity building/trainings

- 5.1. Training on methodologies for co-creation and stakeholder engagement
- 5.2. Training on communication of results to end-users
- 5.3. Training on engagement with policymakers
- 5.4. Training on citizen science and how it can support projects
- 5.5. GDPR training.

6. Policy uptake and impacts

- 6.1. Mapping policy uptake readiness level by decision makers at the EU level.

Each focus area includes several actions (short-, medium- or long-term). Each action is intended to address a specific objective regarding important needs or issues, and to lead to impacts, and should contain concrete activities that WG members could implement and update, as necessary, to fulfil the objective.

2.2 Achievement Highlights

2.2.1 Mapping commonalities, case studies and stakeholders

Among the focus areas of the WG, the Mapping of Commonalities and the Case Studies have progressed the furthest to date. For example, WG members jointly developed a table, which outlines the common challenges faced by the projects. These included access to resources and knowledge capacity, stakeholder engagement, administrative challenges, and methodological and technical issues. Furthermore, the WG successfully mapped out the project partners, stakeholders etc., and the next step will be to build a physical map of the case studies during 2024.

2.2.2 Knowledge sharing: Thematic discussions

The projects held an online session on 27 February 2024 to propose and select topics of high interest for subsequent thematic discussions. Each thematic discussion was led by a project that had advanced knowledge or had achieved results on the specific topic. Other projects were invited to share and contribute to the exchange.

Three thematic discussion topics were selected for 2024 based on the number of votes:

| Topic | Thematic lead | Date |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| Landscape finance and risks – links to insurance Recording available | GDSO | April 2024 |
| Conceptualisation of NbS based restoration. This thematic session was finally integrated into a webinar led by the TransformAR project with participation of the IMPETUS project. More information is provided under section 2.2.3. The session was open to all of the WG projects. Recording available | 1/10/2021 | July 2024 |
| From incremental to transformational change | SUPERB | Autumn 2024 |

The thematic discussions provide a platform for the projects to share their knowledge and experience related to the discussion topic, as well as any tools developed, within the WG and to a wider audience. This collaboration aims to maximise the impacts of the projects. Similarly, if any joint challenges are identified related to the discussion topic, ideas on how to overcome these challenges can be discussed and shared.

2.2.3 Organisation/participation in events

The first collaboration under activity 4.1 – Joint webinars and open seminars involving WG members and thematic experts – took place in the spring 2024. The WG facilitators supported the TransformAR project to organise a webinar on the topic of Nature-Based solutions (NBS), extending an invitation to all the NBS-related WG projects to collaborate. The invitation resulted in the IMPETUS project volunteering to prepare a presentation for the main panel, and other projects joining as participants.

The webinar’s title was “[Nature-based solutions: devising actions to achieve and far-reaching transformational adaptation](#)”. It was held on 3 July 2024 as a joint activity between the WG and the GDSO peer-to-peer programme.

Progress has also been made under activity 4.2 – Joint participation at external events. There were at least three examples of joint participation in events from projects within the WG, and in certain cases involving projects from other WGs. A summary of the events is presented below:

| Name of side event and main conference | Projects involved | Date |
|--|---|------------|
| Extreme Events: Tools for Climate Resilience ECCA (European Climate Change Adaptation conference). Event link is available here | TransformAr, REACHOUT, IMPETUS, ARSINOE and REGILIENCE | April 2023 |
| Skills for Clear Communication of Sustainability European Green Week 2023 | Biodiversity WG: Rethink Action, Firelogue Other WGs: Mediaverse, I-CHANGE | July 2023 |
| Navigating Regional Realities Amid Water Scarcity in Europe European Green Week 2024 | IMPETUS, ARSINOE | June 2024 |
| Wetlands solutions for water resilience and disaster-risk reduction European Green Week 2024 | Biodiveristy WG: WaterLANDS, Other WGs: REAL DEAL, Eurecat | June 2024 |

2.2.4 Policy uptake and impacts

Progress has also been made in the focus area related to Policy Uptake and Impacts, through two exchange sessions where the projects were put in contact with Policy Officers from the European Commission. The sessions included an exchange on policy updates and a discussion on the challenges and opportunities when translating project results and findings to inform and influence policy making.

The first exchange was held on 12 January 2023 as part of the GDSO Non-Public Workshop. The projects were invited to join two breakout groups, on biodiversity policy and climate policy, and Policy Officers from the European Commission were invited to present an overview of the current status and upcoming updates in the most relevant policies within the Biodiversity and Climate Change fields. The presentations were followed by a questions and answers round where questions submitted in advance by the registered participants were addressed by the Policy Officers, and additional questions were asked and discussed.

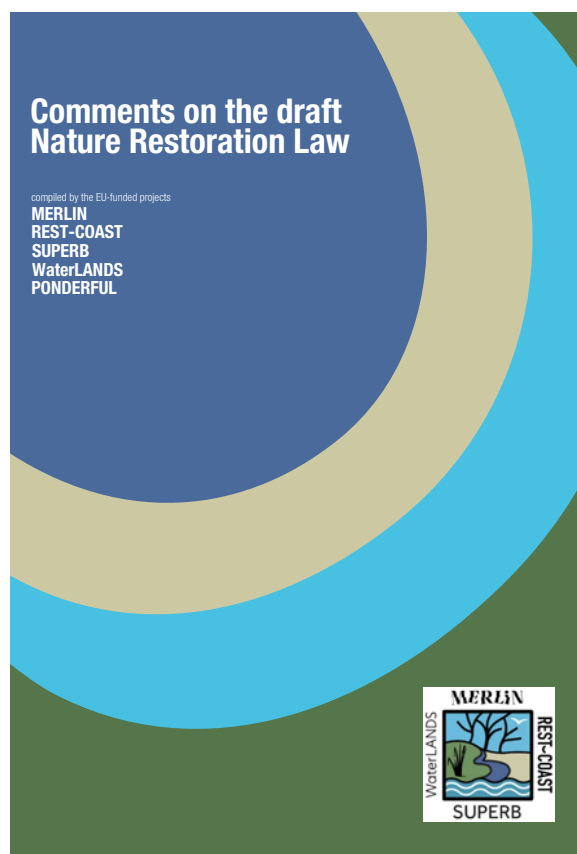


The second exchange took place on 24 April 2024 during the 5th WG meeting. Two Policy Officers from DG RTD presented their views and suggestions to the projects on what to consider when preparing a policy brief or joint document to be addressed to policy makers.

A third action on Policy Uptake and Impacts considered the production of a policy brief by the four nature restoration projects, MERLIN, WaterLANDS, SUPERB and REST-COAST, to provide feedback on the EU's Climate Restoration Law. The policy brief was followed up by a [joint paper](#) that was published in the *Science* journal as a policy forum article in December 2023.

2.3 Project Spotlight & Thematic Explorations

This section presents four projects chosen from the four clusters of the group based on their achievements. The following paragraphs describe recent activities conducted by the projects and what they achieved for the group as a whole.



2.3.1 MERLIN



The MERLIN project focuses on mainstreaming nature-based solutions for systemic change using innovative and contemporary strategies. One method is the [MERLIN PODCAST](#). This provides behind-the-scenes information on some of the most ambitious freshwater restoration projects in Europe and is available on several audio streaming platforms, including Apple Podcasts and Spotify. To date, six episodes have been recorded, produced and released that discussed stream restoration in the Sorraia catchment in

Central Portugal; how economic thinking can improve decision-making on freshwater ecosystem management; how peatlands and wetlands in Europe are being restored; and how the MERLIN Project is structured and what its goals are.

The podcast was presented to the WG as a success story during the 4th WG meeting to inspire other projects to use communication channels to help disseminate project results. For example, the project podcast discussed the Action Plan 2.1 - Sharing methodologies.

2.3.2 TransformAr

Among climate adaptation projects, TransformAr is acknowledged for its recent achievements. Building on the project's activities, [Bañón et al. \(2024\)](#) published a paper on Galician coastal waters that have recently experienced tropicalisation, with 49 non-native species of fish of tropical and subtropical origin now present due to the increase in sea temperature. New marine species represent a risk for the shellfish and fisheries sector of Galicia and this highlights the need for transformational adaptation.

It is also noteworthy that the project's fourth demo, located in Sardinia (Italy), was included by the EU Climate ADAPT Mission in a list of [Mission Stories](#), which describe real-life examples and local and regional actions and good practice for planning, monitoring and implementing climate adaptation solutions.

Thirdly, on 1 December 2023 the project launched its first webinar of the Climate Change Adaptation Network, titled [Climate Governance Platforms](#), aimed at providing a platform for transformational decision making. In a similar way, TransformAr took advantage of the [Water Knowledge Europe](#) event in October 2023 to distribute flyers and present the project's goals and activities.

TransformAr has committed to organise a second webinar on finance for adaptation in the autumn 2024. The other projects of the WG will be invited to contribute to the webinar with GDSO facilitators coordinating the session. This will pool resources to develop a better and wider-reaching webinar and reduce webinar overload for interested stakeholders. It will also increase participation and impact, and enrich the contents and the angles covered. The actions will be agreed during the 5th WG meeting in the autumn 2024 and feed into the Action Plan's activity 3.1 "Organise joint webinars".

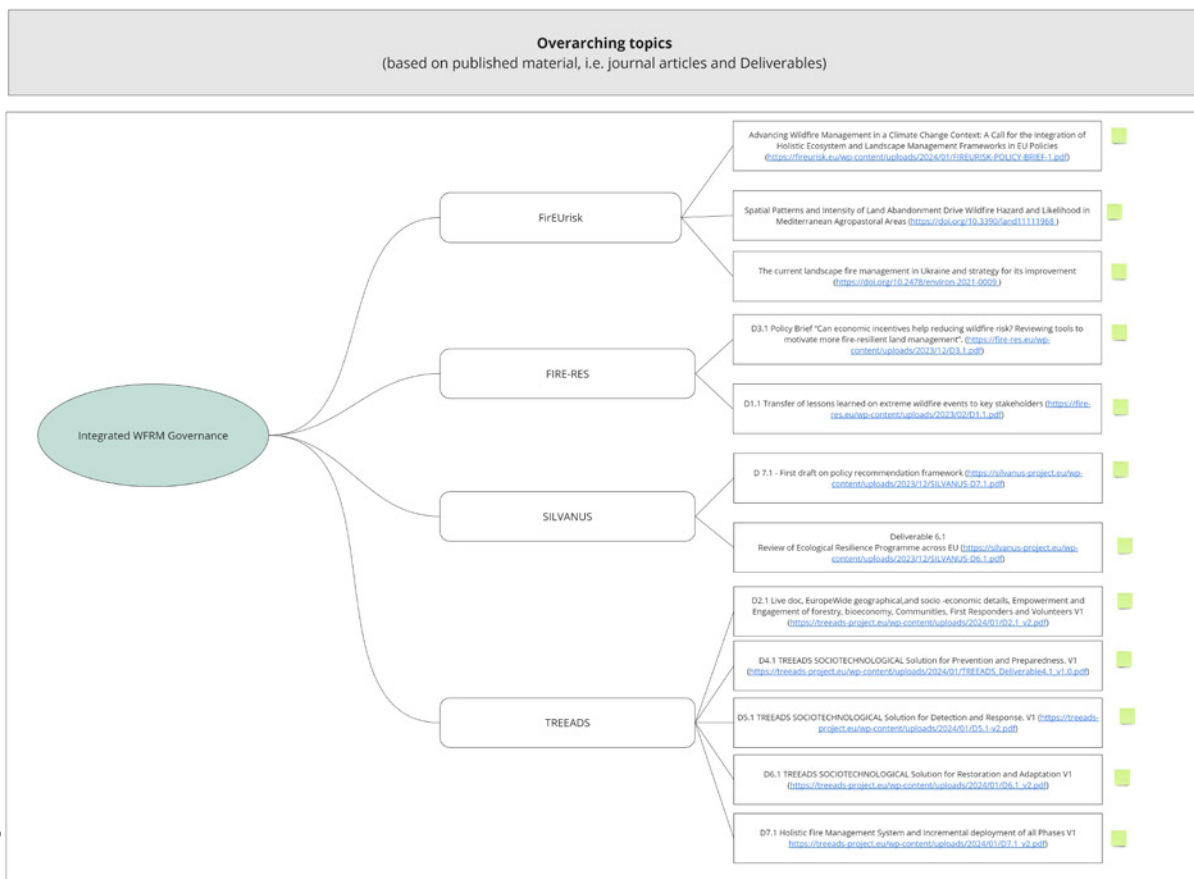
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2.3.3 Firelogue

Firelogue is a Coordination and Support Action that coordinates the forest fires projects SILVANUS, TREEADS and FIRE-RES, which have jointly achieved several positive results. Firstly, the team organised a Wildfire Risk Management Clustering Event, immediately after the [Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre Annual Seminar](#) in November 2023. Furthermore, the project organises a range of exchanges, including between the dissemination and communication teams to develop the hashtag #EUFireProjectUnited. Collaboration was also fostered among Impact Assessment experts, who developed a Harmonised methodology and a Context Paper on the assessment of impacts on the eight Green Deal targets addressed by the forest fire projects. Lastly, joint conferences were organised in 2023, such as the [International Wildland Fire Conference](#) in Porto, and the [European Research and Innovation event on Disaster Management, Security, Defence and Infrastructure Protection](#).

The projects have also started to [map](#) the project results to facilitate more thematic collaborations. Moreover, the team is currently developing a synthesis report on the projects' findings with respect to past wildfire events, which was presented at DG ECHO's [Civil Protection Forum](#) in Brussels, in June 2024. Work is continuing to develop a European Fuel (vegetation) Map and the team is running a [platform](#) to collect portraits of Innovation Actions that focus on technological solutions.



2.3.4 LOCALISED

The LOCALISED consortium has published a number of reports (available [here](#)), and developed two factsheets: one on [SDG Oriented Indicators for SECAPs definition & assessment](#) and one on [Gender and Diversity monitoring in multidisciplinary research projects](#).

LOCALISED joined the MAIA Multiply Programme and the project can be found on its [platform](#). A LOCALISED article was also published on the [Alter! Platform](#), which is aimed at young audiences, and was included in the [ERCIM News Number 136](#). In addition, LOCALISED was a co-organiser of the [2024 Urban Resilience Forum](#) in order to present a prototype of one of the LOCALISED tools and to receive feedback from participants.

LOCALISED has actively participated in all the WG activities, including providing contributions to the mapping of challenges, participating in the thematic discussions, and submitting two success stories that featured their achievements.

Gender and Diversity monitoring in multidisciplinary research projects LOCALISED

Badiejiyani, A., Hausner, B., Riemenschneider, M., & Steiner, M. (2022). *Guidelines on Gender and Diversity monitoring and within multidisciplinary teams* (LOCALISED Deliverable 1.5)

Research projects nowadays commit to Gender and Diversity as part of the working culture and as essential components of the research area in multidisciplinary teams. However, during project implementation often the monitoring of gender and diversity is less prominently addressed. In LOCALISED we have included Gender and Diversity as inherent part of the project management and it is monitored regularly by project partners. **A methodology was defined in an official report (LOCALISED Deliverable 1,5) at the beginning of the project.** In this Factsheet we share some of the main insights on translating commitment to Gender and Diversity into tangible actions and results within multidisciplinary research projects.

WHAT IS LOCALISED?
LOCALISED is downscaling national decarbonization trajectories consistent with Europe's net-zero target to the local levels in a way that would speed up the uptake of mitigation and adaptation actions in local administrations and businesses

- Duration: 48 Months (Starting date: 01/10/2021)
- EU contribution: Horizon 2020 Framework Programme
- Consortium: 12 organisations from 6 countries

WHICH ARE THE TOOLS OF LOCALISED?

- Decarbonisation and Adaptation Profiler for local and regional administrations and their citizens to inform on viable combinations of (sectoral) mitigation and adaptation measures
- Net-zero Business Consultant tool for local and regional business and business associations

Organizational Perspective
To ensure inclusivity and sensitivity within research projects, the adoption of gender and diversity guidelines is imperative at four levels: **institutional, structural, communicational, and research**. These are interconnected and changes at one level can significantly influence others.

inside

STRUCTURAL LEVEL COMMUNICATIONAL LEVEL RESEARCH LEVEL STRUCTURAL LEVEL

outside

© LOCALISED, 2024

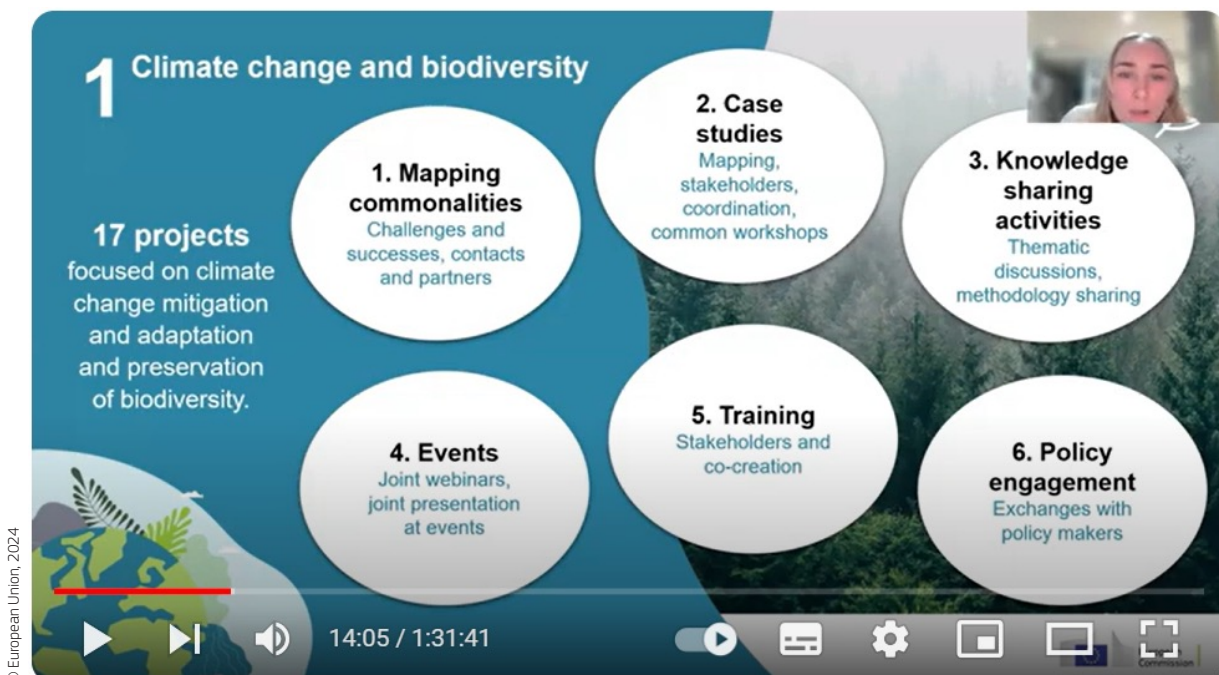
3 Reflective Insights

3.1 Working Group Development and Progress

The majority of the projects in this working group began activities in the Autumn of 2021, with several set to last three to four years; as a result, many are now approaching their final phase. Once these projects are completed, the structure of the WG will change, since some projects will leave and others will have reached a more advanced phase. The focus of the WG will also change, given that each of the projects will no longer be in its planning phase (which entails structural and methodological planning, data gathering etc.), but will instead be working towards the implementation of its plans. Moreover, the WG as a whole will focus on presenting the project outcomes and highlighting how the challenges were addressed.

Because of this, it is now possible to include additional projects in the WG. A Network of Multipliers event was hosted by the GDSO (the recording is available [here](#)) and, due to a shared focus, one of the projects in attendance requested to be put in contact with the Climate Change and Biodiversity WG. This project will therefore be invited to attend the upcoming meeting of the WG. Furthermore, there will be a call with the projects of the WG to discuss which external projects they would be interested in collaborating with or including in the WG, with a particular focus on projects related to climate adaptation or nature restoration.

Furthermore, the exchanges in the WG have shown that projects share a common challenge of how to engage with audiences outside the projects and beyond the research environment, such as policymakers, companies, industry associations etc. In particular, projects have struggled to interact with policymakers and Directorates-General (at the EU level). They signalled a need for additional support from the WG and GDSO to broaden the projects' reach and influence, which the GDSO is now exploring. Some of the actions taken during the April 2024 GDSO meetings included inviting EU Policy Officers to WG meetings, and offering a breakout session on how to write policy briefs.



3.1.1 Development of success stories

Several of the projects have also reacted to the Success Stories initiative, which was launched centrally by the GDSO to publish and promote the achievements of GDC projects. There have been three calls for success stories since January 2023 to July 2024, the last being in April 2024. Success stories are published on the [GDSO website](#). 14 success stories have been received from WG projects, eight of which are online and the remaining six will be published in the autumn of 2024.



| Project | Success Story |
|---|---|
| 2023 calls – already published | |
| REST-COAST | Revitalising coastal ecosystems |
| REACHOUT | Empowering European cities to tackle climate challenges |
| ARSINOE | Presenting SDG data visually to enable climate resilient regions |
| LOCALISED | Supporting decarbonisation through local SECAPs and SDGs |
| CityCLIM | Climate change information and mitigation services platform |
| WaterLANDS | Merging arts and science to increase public engagement |
| SUPERB | Transformative changes for large-scale forest restoration |
| SILVANUS | Combatting forest fires through technological innovation |
| 2024 spring call – to be published autumn 2024 | |
| Firelogue | Wildfire Risk Management clustering events |
| FIRE-RES | FIRE-RES Geo Catch App |
| LOCALISED | Tools for visualising Renovation Wave programmes and Adaptation and Mitigation measures in Europe |
| Rethink Action | Land use-based Adaptation and Mitigation Solutions Catalogue |
| SUPERB | Involving stakeholders in forest ecosystem restoration |
| TransformAr | Transforming Wetland Governance with the Innovative approach of the Coastal Contract |

3.2 Reflection on Challenges and Lessons Learned

One of the main challenges that the WG has faced was how to develop collaboration among projects, especially among those from different call topics. At present collaboration happens between projects working within parallel thematic clusters (e.g. biodiversity cluster) or between Coordination and Support Action (CSA) projects (e.g. projects coordinated by REGILIENCE and Firelogue). However, promoting collaboration outside clusters has been more complex. To increase collaboration, the facilitator team identified which communication methods worked best. For example, follow-up discussions on specific actions after the WG meetings were found to facilitate progress and coordination, whilst also proving a challenge ensuring participation of all members. Thematic discussions and webinars that involved stakeholder participation also attracted interest from WG members.

A second, parallel challenge has been the overload of tasks and networking obligations for the projects. Several projects have the mandate to collaborate with several parallel initiatives alongside the GDSO WG, which include topic clusters², networking with certain projects and/or contributing to some of the EU Missions³ activities. Projects reported that finding the time and space for this was challenging. It was noted to offer multiple slots when scheduling sessions to ensure higher participation. Some of the strategies that were used to facilitate project representation, included the following:

- 1) When a project coordinator was not able to participate in the meetings **on a recurring basis**, to designate a deputy reference contact person, and/or to involve the consortium partner in charge of communications. A strategy that worked well was to involve a more junior and proactive person with more availability to follow all the WG communications.
- 2) When the coordinator was not available for a **specific meeting**, to send another person from the coordinating organisation who was involved in the project.

A third issue worth mentioning relates to divergencies in feedback on data gathering preferences and meeting organisation. Facilitators received, from some projects, requests for templates that facilitate information gathering and sharing. Other projects disliked the number of templates shared and inputs requested. As a result, the facilitators took the approach of creating a small number of integrated and efficient templates that could serve as common databases for the group.

Meanwhile, WG members asked for assistance to coordinate the cross-project discussions and WG activities, instead of leaving the projects to lead these. In response, the facilitators proposed additional short sessions in between the two annual WG meetings in order to coordinate progress towards implementation of the actions. Examples of outputs of such meetings, include a map of common challenges, and the shortlist of thematic discussion sessions to schedule. The WG team will continue with this approach going forwards.

Overall, it appears that the projects prefer not to attend and participate in too many broad meetings, activities and events, and instead prefer shorter, more targeted activities, which promote collaboration.

2 In certain instances, the EC Agencies responsible for funding and coordinating projects grouped the subset of projects under each Green Deal Call topic into thematic 'clusters'. These clusters were established to foster collaboration and synergies among projects addressing similar themes within the call topic. For the Climate Change and Biodiversity working group, four clusters were formed: forest fire management, climate adaptation pathways, nature restoration, and building citizen capacities for climate adaptation and mitigation.

3 EU Missions are European wide initiatives launched by the European Commission as a new way to bring concrete solutions to some of the worlds' greatest challenges. They have ambitious goals and will deliver concrete results by 2030. More information is available at: [EU Missions in Horizon Europe - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-room/pages/press-room.aspx?story_id=12345)

Lastly, at the WG level, it has been challenging to keep track of all the developments taking place within individual projects. Therefore, projects have been given the opportunity to share updates and highlights before WG meetings, dependent on project availability. As the projects gradually gain confidence in the promotional value of the GDSO, they are increasingly sharing relevant information as they produced it.

3.3 Conclusive Observations

In summary, the ongoing collaborations within the biodiversity cluster and CSA projects demonstrate a broad opportunity for cooperation within the WG. However, it would be even more effective if the actions taken were aligned with actions planned by parallel groups or even individual projects (e.g. webinars on common topics of interest). As the group meetings have shown, there is interest from the projects in broadening their network and strengthening their links, but they may require additional support from the WG and the GDSO in order to achieve this. Furthermore, the WG is keen to include new projects from outside of the GDSO, and some of these projects have already shown an interest in joining the WG discussions. This would provide an additional opportunity for collaboration. To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of exchanges, and to enable intra-cluster and external cooperation, the WG should focus on organising short, frequent meetings to provide additional, more targeted forums for discussion.

4 Next Steps

4.1 Objectives Ahead

The short-term objectives of the WG are to implement additional thematic discussions, based on the activities that the projects have showed the most interest in, such as the mapping of stakeholders, workshops and collaboration events, to give projects more visibility regarding the activities of others and how they can align. For example, a joint webinar on finance and potentially on stakeholder co-development was identified as the next target action.

Meanwhile, starting from the 6th WG meeting, a shift towards more results-oriented activities is anticipated. By the end of 2024, the projects will have completed their third year, and some will be concluding or nearing completion. Therefore, their main pool of results will be available and the focus of the joint activities will be to share, disseminate and mainstream the findings, tools and outcomes among themselves and with a wider audience, including strategies for leaving a legacy that endures beyond the projects' conclusion.

4.2 Pipeline

- Joint webinar on Financing – October-November 2024, potentially in collaboration with the Mission on Climate Adaptation.
- The 6th WG meeting is planned for November 2024.

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