



# Newsletter October 2015

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## The partners

### Full members

French Foundation for Research on Biodiversity, FRANCE - coordinator  
Austrian Science Fund, AUSTRIA  
Belgian Science Policy Office, BELGIUM  
The Research Foundation - Flanders, BELGIUM  
National Science Fund Bulgaria, BULGARIA  
Estonian Research Council, ESTONIA  
French National Research Agency, FRANCE  
French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, FRANCE  
New Caledonian Economic Development Agency, FRANCE  
Guadeloupe Region, FRANCE  
French Guyana Region, FRANCE  
Reunion Region, FRANCE  
German aeronautics and space research centre, GERMANY  
German Research Foundation, GERMANY  
Ministry of Agriculture, HUNGARY  
Research Council of Lithuania, LITHUANIA  
Research Council of Norway, NORWAY  
National Science Centre, POLAND  
Portuguese national funding agency for science, research and technology, PORTUGAL  
Regional Fund for Science and Technology, PORTUGAL  
The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding, ROMANIA  
Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, SPAIN  
Regional Government of the Canary Islands, SPAIN  
Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning, SWEDEN  
Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, SWEDEN  
Swiss National Science Foundation, SWITZERLAND  
The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, THE NETHERLANDS  
Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, TURKEY  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UNITED KINGDOM  
Joint Nature Conservation Committee, UNITED KINGDOM  
Natural Environment Research Council, UNITED KINGDOM

### Associate member

Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, LATVIA

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#### BiodivERsA's Twitter Account

Get in-the-moment updates on  
BiodivERsA's activities via  
our Twitter Account

[@BiodivERsA3](https://twitter.com/BiodivERsA3)

## Edito



Xavier Le Roux, BiodivERsA coordinator and CEO

The BiodivERsA network has entered its third phase since February 2015. Indeed, the European Commission has accepted to fund the network for another 5 years period (2015-2019) in the form of an ERA-Net COFUND tool under the Horizon 2020 funding programme.

With this third phase, the network has been substantially enlarged, with 31 partners from 18 countries (compared to 21 from 15 countries in BiodivERsA2). Among these new partners, six are from overseas countries and territories. Furthermore, the Latvian Ministry of Environment and Regional Development became Associate Member of BiodivERsA in June 2015. The geographical and institutional coverage of this enlarged network will be particularly adequate to develop the European Research Area on biodiversity and ecosystem services, also accounting for the research landscape

overseas. We hope to welcome several new partners in the future, and the BiodivERsA network will probably continue to grow.

The importance of BiodivERsA to program and support research has also increased during the last years, as exemplified by its last joint calls for research projects. After the implementation of a joint call with FACCE-JPI (Joint Programming Initiative on Food, Agriculture, Climate Change) in 2013-2014, BiodivERsA has launched in May 2015 an additional call together with the European Commission. This call is of a much larger amplitude than the previous ones: it gathers a total of 24 national and regional funding organisations from 15 different countries, with an indicative budget of ca. 30 million euros. This will allow the network to support more research projects. We have received over 120 pre-proposals for this call, which is a great success already! As usual for BiodivERsA, proposals will be evaluated according to pre-defined criteria for scientific excellence on the one hand, and stakeholder engagement and policy/society relevance on the other hand.

**“ It is increasingly recognized that BiodivERsA is playing a major, strategic role for the promotion and support of the large biodiversity and ecosystem services domain. ”**

More generally, it is increasingly recognized that BiodivERsA is playing a major, strategic role for the promotion and support of the large biodiversity and ecosystem services domain. Through its different activities (from mapping of the research landscape, priority setting, and funding of research, to promoting the science-society/policy interfacing and disseminating scientific knowledge to stakeholders and policy makers), the network has proven to actively contribute to the build-up of the European Research Area. BiodivERsA also develops foresight activities to better identify forthcoming main challenges for this research domain. In this context, BiodivERsA has contributed to frame the emerging term of ‘Nature-Based Solutions’ and evaluate its potential importance for future research in Europe.

In support of the different arguments developed above, the articles of this newsletter provide more information about 2015 BiodivERsA call, outline the outputs of research projects funded through a previous (2008) call, highlight BiodivERsA’s work in the field of nature-based solutions and list the latest activities and productions of the network. Two new partners are also presented: the Innovation and Technology Park of New Caledonia, and the Latvian Ministry of Environment and Regional Development.

We wish you a pleasant reading!

**Xavier Le Roux,**  
*Coordinator and CEO of BiodivERsA*

# BiodivERsA 2015 call: beginning of the second step

The first step of the [BiodivERsA 2015 call for proposals](#) is now closed.

Launched on 14th of May 2015, the 6th BiodivERsA call addresses the following theme: "Understanding and managing biodiversity dynamics to improve ecosystem functioning and delivery of services in a global change context. The cases of soils and sediments, and land-, river- and sea-scapes".

Twenty-four BiodivERsA partners from 15 different countries are participating in this joint call co-funded by the European Commission, with an indicative global budget of ca. 30 million euro.

As a first step, applicants were invited to form - by 20th July 2015 - transnational research consortia composed of teams of at least three different countries

participating to the call. BiodivERsA received **over 120 pre-proposals** that are now being subjected to an eligibility check by funding organisations. In October, after the eligibility check, project coordinators will be invited to submit their full proposal with a submission deadline on 16 December 2015.

The proposals will subsequently be evaluated by an independent evaluation committee composed of both scientific and policy/management experts, as well as by external reviewers. They will be assessed according to criteria of scientific excellence, quality and efficiency of project implementation, and society/policy relevance and stakeholder engagement.

The results of the evaluation should be known early June 2016. Selected projects are expected to start between October 2016 and March 2017.

> For more information on the 2015 call, please [click here](#) or contact the Call Secretariat: Sophie Germann, [sophie.germann@agencerecherche.fr](mailto:sophie.germann@agencerecherche.fr)



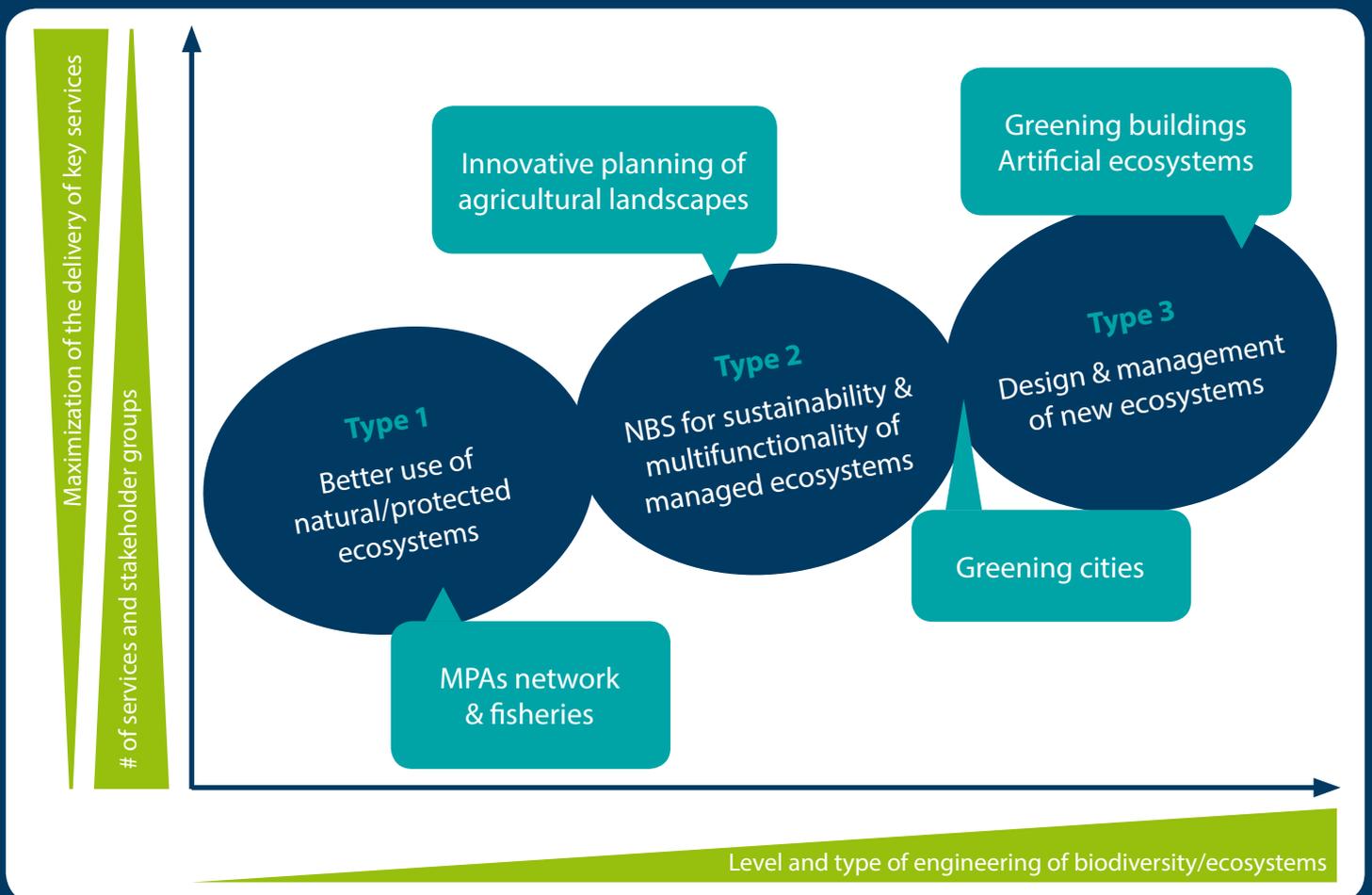
*Donkey carrying water during a field trip (RACE project)*

# BiodivERsA and Nature-Based solutions: bridging the gap between research and innovation

Nature-based solutions (NBS) generally refer to the sustainable management and use of nature for tackling societal challenges such as climate change, water and food security, public health provision, and disaster risk management. Building on, and complementing traditional biodiversity conservation and management strategies, this concept inherently integrates societal factors such as human well-being and poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, and efficient governance modes.

The European Research Area (ERA) allows advancing scientific research on NBS and thus contributes to the development of evidence base and relevant knowledge for EU policy-making. Several networks are playing a pivotal role in this extent (e.g. [Alternet 2015 Conference on Nature and Urban Wellbeing](#)). BiodivERsA in particular is actively contributing to identify a common Research & Innovation agenda on biodiversity and ecosystem services, which could be extended to include NBS, to develop the research community, and to foster the link with stakeholders.

Last year (11-12 June 2014), for example, BiodivERsA organised a [horizon-scanning workshop](#) to provide an opportunity for BiodivERsA project scientists and BiodivERsA members to learn more about NBS through discussions with policy makers and a range of stakeholders (funders, NGOs, practitioners,...), and to set priorities for future research and management. These discussions also allowed to reflect on a typology for NBS (Figure 1), the added-value of the concept, and potential opportunities and risks (Eggermont et al., in press).



**Figure 1:** Schematic representation of the range of NBS approaches. Three main types of NBS are defined, differing in the level of engineering or management applied to biodiversity and ecosystems (X axis), and in the number of services to be delivered, the number of stakeholder groups targeted, and the likely level of maximization of the delivery of targeted services (Y axis). Some examples of NBS are located in this schematic representation. Note that the Y axis could be shifted, and that Type 3 NBS cannot be viewed as 'better' than Type 1 NBS, the 3 types being complementary. (Eggermont et al. in press, 2015)

Reference: Eggermont H., Balian E., Azevedo J. M. N., Beumer V., Brodin T., Claudet J., Fady B., Grube M., Keune H., Lamarque P., Reuter K., Smith M., Van Ham C., Weisser W. & Le Roux X., 2015. Nature-based solutions: New influence for environmental management and research in Europe. *GAIA Ecological Perspectives* (in press)

To further explore how the ERA could contribute to bridge the gap between research and innovation focusing on NBS as one of the grand challenges societies are currently facing, BiodivERsA and DG Research & Innovation jointly organized an informal workshop (promoted as [Green Week side event](#)) on June 2, in the Belgian Science Policy Office - Brussels. The workshop attracted various types of stakeholders (regional, national and EU policy makers; funding bodies; European networks and platforms; natural and social scientists; conservation organisations; private sector and consultants) both from mainland and overseas.

The scene was set by [four keynotes](#) presenting the topic from the perspective of DG Research and Innovation (by Kurt Vandenberghe, Director Climate Action and Resource Efficiency, DG R&I), BiodivERsA (by Xavier Le Roux, CEO and coordinator), the Private Sector (by Marta Fernandez, ARUP) and scientists (Ricardo Teixeira, Terraprima Portugal). The two former presentations touched on the various challenges, opportunities and threats ahead, and the two latter nicely illustrated the power and benefits of innovating with nature.

Subsequent discussions with the audience specifically focused on the role (impact) of scientific research, the need of a systemic approach, the ways to capitalize on existing knowledge and concepts (like ecosystem services and natural capital), the role of overseas countries and territories, and the needs to illustrate the benefits of NBS. The potential of existing EU and Member States instruments and infrastructures was also briefly touched on, further underlining the strategic role that a funding network like BiodivERsA could play in supporting knowledge generation on biodiversity and NBS, which would include bridging the gap between research and innovation.



*Kurt Vandenberghe, Director Climate Action and Resource Efficiency, DG R&I, presenting the challenges and opportunities of NBS*

## Analysis of the 2008 BiodivERsA projects outputs

Since its creation, BiodivERsA has worked to programme and support research that tackles key scientific questions at the forefront of current knowledge and responds to pressing issues for society (including policy-makers), e.g. how to protect, manage and use biodiversity and ecosystems in a sustainable way. To achieve this objective, BiodivERsA partners have designed specific processes to shape calls for research projects and evaluate submitted proposals, insisting on the societal and political relevance of projects they support, in addition to their scientific excellence. In particular, BiodivERsA accounts for suggestions made by scientific experts and pays particular attention to the policy and societal context when selecting topics and designing calls for research. Beyond the use of widely accepted criteria for evaluating academic excellence, the partners have developed explicit criteria for

the evaluation of policy relevance of the research that BiodivERsA calls for and for stakeholder engagement in research projects. On top of this, evaluation panels mobilized by BiodivERsA involve experts in environmental policy, conservation and management of biodiversity and ecosystem services, alongside leading scientific experts. Finally, BiodivERsA also offers direct support for researchers in engaging with their stakeholders through dedicated events and hands-on tools such as the [BiodivERsA Stakeholder Engagement Handbook](#).

Using such innovative approaches is challenging for the applicants and ultimately the calls' successes. In this context, BiodivERsA partners decided to evaluate to what extent this approach is successful, i.e. to what extent the projects funded by BiodivERsA are able to effectively deliver high-profile academic products,

while fruitfully engaging with relevant stakeholders and delivering a range of society-relevant products. The analysis was performed on the research projects funded in the 2008 Call on “*Biodiversity: linking scientific advancement to policy and practice*”. The findings are presented in the “*Analysis of the outputs of BiodivERsA funded projects*”, available on the [BiodivERsA website](#).

The analysis presents general statistics at the overall call level, looking at the volume and quality of scientific publications, the international networking effect of such a pan-European approach to research programming and funding, and the types of stakeholders researchers have worked with, and how closely. The report also presents individual projects’ outputs (scientific publications and stakeholder-relevant products), with concrete figures and facts.

The results of this analysis demonstrate that research supported by BiodivERsA is effectively linking scientific advancement - with major breakthroughs - to policy and practice thanks to very efficient links and collaboration with relevant stakehol-

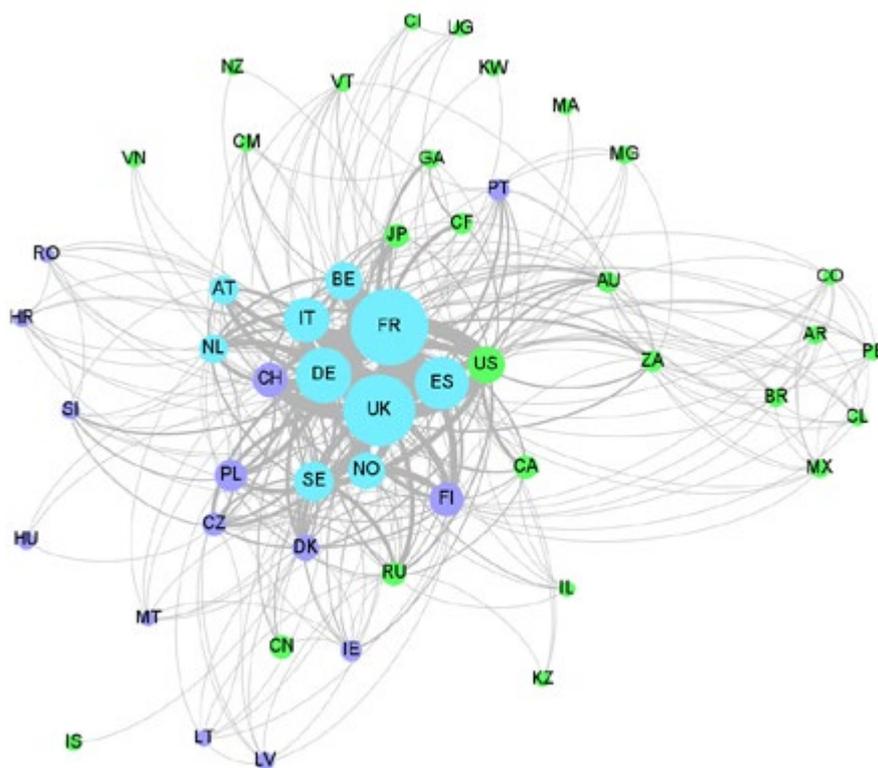


Figure 2: Map of the research collaborations between countries observed in all the 2008 projects’ publications. Light blue dots are for countries geographically in Europe and participating to the call; dark blue dots are for countries geographically in Europe but not participating to the call; and green dots correspond to countries not in Europe and not participating to the call.

Most importantly, we observed that no trade-off exists between academic excellence assessed from scientific publications and the production level of society/policy-relevant outputs, or the investment of research teams in stakeholder engagement.

**“ No trade-off observed between academic excellence and the level of production of society/policy relevant products ”**

ders. The productivity and quality in terms of academic findings resulting from these projects are very high. The analysis further showcased that, while BiodivERsA reached its goal in placing participating countries in the centre of international research collaborations, it also generated a leverage effect in promoting international collaborations beyond countries participating to the call (see Figure 2). The analysis of stakeholder engagement in the projects further showed the effectiveness of collaborations between scientists and civil or political actors, the different stages at which they were engaged, and their level of involvement.

At a time where the co-creation of knowledge across disciplines and links to policy and civil society issues is increasingly called for, this report demonstrates that BiodivERsA promotes an innovative alliance between what is often called ‘basic’ and ‘applied’ research while avoiding the trade-off often feared between academic excellence and societal impact. This also demonstrates that many biodiversity researchers have developed skills to collaborate with relevant societal groups, reaching very efficiently the goals of scientific excellence and relevance of research results for society and policy.

[You can download the brochure here.](#)

# Latest events of the biodivERsA3 network

## Kick-off of research projects funded through the 2013-2014 BiodivERsA/FACCE-JPI joint call on “Promoting synergies and reducing trade-offs between food supply, biodiversity and ecosystem services”

In 2013-2014, BiodivERsA and FACCE-JPI (Joint Programming Initiative on agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change) jointly launched a [pan-European call on the theme “Promoting synergies and reducing trade-offs between food supply, biodiversity and ecosystem services”](#). The selected projects were presented on the kick-off meeting of 29 April 2015, organized by both networks.

The kick-off meeting started with an introductory speech by Isabelle Albouy (FACCE-JPI coordinator), and Xavier Le Roux (BiodivERsA CEO and coordinator). They underlined the success of this joint call at the crossroad of the issues addressed by both bodies, which allowed the funding of 10 research projects for a total amount of 10.2 million euro, raised by 10 BiodivERsA and FACCE-JPI partners.

The meeting continued with a keynote by Felix Herzog (Agroscope, Switzerland) on “Agro-ecosystem: Complexity and biodiversity at various scales and its importance for the agricultural production system” and one by Bill Slee (The James Hutton Institute, United Kingdom), who was the Chair of the Evaluation panel of the BiodivERsA/FACCE-JPI joint call. The latter highlighted the quality of the selected proposals both at the scientific and societal impact level. He also under-

lined the importance of the topic of the call in a world where there is a need to balance the demand for food against the capacity of the environment to deliver it.

The researchers of the ten funded projects were then offered the possibility to present their project, its aims and preliminary findings. This also allowed interactions between them and lead to the identification of complementarities, possible links and common activities between their projects.

For detailed information on the call and funded projects, please consult the publication on [BiodivERsA/FACCE-JPI 2013-2014 joint call for proposals](#): «Promoting synergies and reducing trade-offs between food supply, biodiversity and ecosystem services». [Keynotes are also available here](#).

## BiodivERsA at the green week

In the context of the [green week](#) organized in Brussels from 3 to 5 June 2015 on the theme “Nature, our health, our wealth”, BiodivERsA staffed an information booth.

This was the opportunity to discuss with many participants, including the European Commissioner for the Environment - Karmenu Vella - on the network, its outputs and results.



From left to right: Bill Slee (Chair of the 2013-2014 Evaluation Committee); Xavier Le Roux (BiodivERsA Coordinator); Isabelle Albouy (FACCE-JPI Coordinator)

## BiodivERsA Project Clustering Workshop: Improving Science-Policy Interfacing for BiodivERsA funded projects

As more and more urgent issues regarding biodiversity and ecosystem services are coming on top of the policy agenda (e.g. pollinator health, invasive species, sustainable use of ecosystems, synthetic biology), there is a crucial need for policy makers to access to the best available knowledge in order to make well-informed decisions. This is where the concept of the science-policy interface (SPI) comes into play referring to *“the many ways in which scientists, policy makers and others link up to communicate, exchange ideas, and jointly develop knowledge for enriching policy and decision making processes and/or research. They involve exchange of information and knowledge leading to learning, and ultimately to changed behaviour”* (see: FP7-project [SPIRAL](#)). An SPI can also refer to activities developed by research projects to improve interactions between the project, policy-makers and other stakeholders and ways in which project results are communicated to policy actors. In this context, communication strategies and tools are critical and need to go beyond the usual one-way communication “Science speaks to Policy”.

The BiodivERsA ERA-net has explored for several years how its funded projects could best engage with their stakeholders throughout the research development process (from co-design, over implementation, to dissemination of project outputs) and has also promoted the production of [policy briefs](#) linking results from BiodivERsA funded projects to major EU policies. So far, BiodivERsA policy briefs have been developed on the successful results of individual projects. Yet, in some cases, communication building on clustered results of several related projects, and engaging in a more proactive interaction with relevant policy makers might be more appropriate. This will be particularly relevant for implementing BiodivERsA’s third phase, during which a new series of policy briefs will be produced using the results of projects funded by the past (2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014) and new (2015) calls.

On 23-24 June 2015, BiodivERsA therefore organized a ‘Project Clustering’ Workshop with as main goals to provide a space for dialogue between relevant policy makers and researchers from BiodivERsA funded projects in order to build relationships and common understanding; and to promote the development of policy briefs based on clustered results from several

BiodivERsA projects addressing current policy needs. Specific objectives were to:

- Identify current policy needs/hot topics for which BiodivERsA funded projects could contribute valuable information and support decision making;
- Co-build (with researchers and policy makers) clear, relevant and manageable policy questions that could be addressed by a policy brief compiling results from several related BiodivERsA projects;
- Start putting together teams of projects and think of preliminary schemes for “clustered” policy briefs identifying contributing projects, key ideas and target audiences; and
- Help BiodivERsA-supported researchers to network and generate potential future collaborations among them.

The workshop was attended by scientists from 27 BiodivERsA funded projects, a few professional knowledge brokers and policy makers from regional/national and EU levels. Through different group discussions on 4 topics (Multifunctional Landscape Management; Invasive Alien Species; Resilience, Tipping points, Scenarios; and Ecosystem Services: from Valuation to Management) participants were able to identify a wide range of potential issues/questions that could be tackled by putting results of several projects together (full report [available here](#)). Rather few policy makers attended the workshop and the questions identified will have to be discussed with additional relevant policy makers and with professional knowledge brokers to make sure the wording and the expectations are appropriate. Continuous collaboration and feedback between BiodivERsA scientists, policy makers and knowledge brokers will be key to the production of relevant, credible and attractive policy briefs.

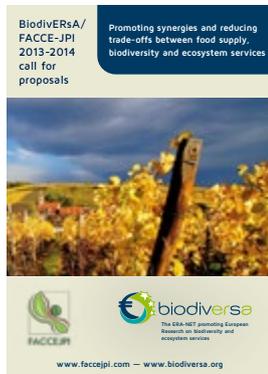
[Keynotes of the workshop are available here.](#)



*Juliette Young presenting the challenges of the science-policy interface and potential ways to address them*

# BiodivERsA's latest publications

## Brochure on the 2013/2014 BiodivERsA/FACCE-JPI joint call



Published in April 2015, this brochure offers insights on the results of the BiodivERsA/FACCE-JPI joint call on “Promoting synergies and reducing trade-offs between food supply, biodiversity and ecosystem services».

The brochure gives an overview of the call process (from the development of the call to the evaluation of the proposals), outlines the statistics of the call (e.g. success rate per country) as well as the profile of both submitted and selected proposals and presents the 10 projects that were funded for a total amount of 10.2M euro.

[You can download the brochure here](#)

## Analysis of 2008 BiodivERsA funded projects' outputs



Published in late October 2015, this BiodivERsA report highlights the outputs of the 2008 BiodivERsA funded projects both on scientific level (scientific publication) and policy/societal impact level (stakeholder-relevant products) and stresses that there is a lack of trade-off

between scientific excellence of the outputs and the level of production of society/policy-relevant outputs and/or of stakeholder engagement for these BiodivERsA funded projects.

[You can download the brochure here](#)

## Digest of the Stakeholder Engagement Handbook



In 2014, the BiodivERsA network has published a [stakeholder engagement handbook](#) to help researchers planning and carrying out research projects to identify and engage with stakeholders and thus enhance the impact of the research carried out.

BiodivERsA is now pleased to announce the publication of the [BiodivERsA stakeholder engagement handbook digest](#), which summarizes in four pages the stakeholder engagement handbook, and provides an overview of the methods and tools detailed in the SEH.

[The BiodivERsA stakeholder engagement handbook and its digest are available here](#)

## GAIA article on Nature-based solutions

Developed following the BiodivERsA workshop on Nature-Based Solutions organised in June 2014 and accepted in August 2015, this article frames and discusses the emerging term of Nature-based solutions that may deeply influence future environmental management and research in Europe.

Once published online, you will be able to retrieve the article on the website of [GAIA Ecological Perspectives for Science and Society](#); otherwise, contact H. Eggermont ([h.eggermont@biodiversity.be](mailto:h.eggermont@biodiversity.be))

### Reference of the article:

Eggermont H., Balian E., Azevedo J. M. N., Beumer V., Brodin T., Claudet J., Fady B., Grube M., Keune H., Lamarque P., Reuter K., Smith M., Van Ham C., Weisser W. & Le Roux X., 2015. Nature-based solutions: New influence for environmental management and research in Europe. *GAIA Ecological Perspectives* (in press)

# Partners profile

In the context of its third phase (2015-2020), BiodivERsA has extended its network to better cover European biodiversity research both thematically and geographically. Besides, in order to allow new partners to join the network and discover its activities, BiodivERsA has created a status of associated member.

This newsletter is an opportunity to present two new partners: one located overseas (the Innovation and Technology Park of New Caledonia) and one located on mainland (the Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development), who joined the network in June 2015 as associated partner.



## Innovation and Technology Park of New Caledonia (ADECAL-Technopole)

The Innovation and Technology Park of New Caledonia is a key stakeholder in the fields of innovation and sustainable harnessing of marine and land ecosystems of New Caledonia, which is a French OCT (Overseas Countries and Territories) located in the Pacific Ocean.

ADECAL-Technopole has a private status with a board gathering public funders (France, Government of New-Caledonia and the 3 local authorities), as well as representatives of the scientific and economic sectors. The general objectives are to contribute to increasing New Caledonia's competitiveness and appeal through development research, transfer and innovation, in particular by developing links between the business world, public and private research, higher education and the public authorities.

### PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES

ADECAL-Technopole is structured around two divisions focused on marine and terrestrial ecosystems and a crosscutting division supporting innovation, which are developing activities on priority topics of common interest for New Caledonia. ADECAL-Technopole is also programme owner of a 25 years old local R&D programme dedicated to the sustainable management of marine resources of New Caledonia (ZoNéCo).

Its programmes and activities are co-designed with local authorities and other stakeholders (including end-users) and implemented in 7 technological centres (on fish, prawn and microalgae aquaculture and biotechnology, beekeeping, cash crops and tropical tubers) that are supported by dedicated experimentation facilities, infrastructures and staff based in 11 towns over the 3 provinces of New Caledonia. R&D activities are

implemented in partnership with local and national research institutions.

Since 2014, a business incubator is also supporting innovative companies or concepts.

### EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The development of international partnerships is a strategic activity of the Technopole. It aims to build links between existing expertise in New Caledonia and the Asian-Pacific, French and European expertise on themes of common interest. It also wants to foster cooperation opportunities for the local R&I community and the European Research Area. As a consequence, ADECAL-Technopole has been closely involved in the establishment of the NetBiome network during the two projects phases (Era-Net 2007-2011 and Csa 2013-2016 and funding of the 2011 Netbiome Joint Call).

Joining BiodivERsA is a great opportunity to continue the efforts engaged by regional authorities, to demonstrate the contribution and assets of (sub)tropical ORs and OCTs of Europe for research toward biodiversity management in support to sustainable development, and to increase partnership opportunities between local overseas and European continental teams. ADECAL-Technopole will as well share with the consortium overseas experience and stakes in multi-actors approach and transfer tools.

In the same spirit, ADECAL-Technopole is also a partner of Era-Marine Biotech (2013-2017) and a consortium member of TOPIC (Europe Enterprise Network EEN), which started in 2015.

For more information, [please click here](#).

## Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (MoERD)



MoERD is responsible for implementing policy in three areas - environment protection, regional development as well as information and communication technologies. In the area of environmental protection the Ministry deals with the establishment of prerequisites and conditions for nature conservation, clean environment and ensures that natural resources are used effectively and in a sustainable manner.

In the area of regional development the Ministry implements and evaluates regional policy at state level, provides methodological guidelines and supervises the territorial development planning process, as well as ensures the development and supervision of local governments with the overall goal of achieving well-balanced and sustainable development of the country. Implementation and coordination of the e-Governance is another broad policy area of the Ministry.

MoERD in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Science performs the necessary measures to develop environmental sciences in order to promote scientific activities in the field of sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental education and to ensure the performance of environmental quality research, development of eco-innovation and environmental technologies, as well as the increase of awareness and proposition of solution regarding environmental protection problems.

MoERD is a member of the Latvian Council of Science. The Council is a counsellor of the Latvian Government on research and researchers training issues and takes active part in funding research projects on a competitive basis, promotes the development of resources for Latvian researcher and fosters international scientific cooperation.

The Ministry in co-operation with other ministries, authorities of higher education and colleges involved in the environmental science and environmental education established the Environmental Science and Education Council.

MoERD owns and manages research programmes on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Three institutions supervised by the Ministry are actually involved in scientific activities:

1. The **Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology** - a scientific institute dedicated to basic and applied research of ecology and environmental problems in the Baltic Sea and coastal area, including coastal biodiversity, invasive species, ecological modelling.
2. **The National Botanic Garden of Latvia** - the largest botanical garden in the Baltic states, carrying out investigations in plant acclimatisation, breeding, propagation, ex situ conservation of Latvian protected plant species and in situ research of some species as well floristical and taxonomical research which are engaged in research programmes on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
3. **The Nature Conservation agency** carrying out assessment of ecosystems and their services for nature biodiversity conservation and management (2014 - 2018) supported by the LIFE programme on Ecosystem Services.

Besides, MoERD is in charge of some priorities of the 2014-2017 National Research Programme –such as „Environment, Climate and Energy (ecosystem services and biodiversity)” and “Sustainable use of natural resources (food, forestry, natural resources)”. MoERD participation in the BiodivERsA network will be a great opportunity to deepen its cooperation with international research programme and to further support biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of ecosystem services.

For more information, [please click here](#).

## Upcoming activities

- Staff exchange among BiodivERsA partners on the topic "Follow-up of research projects and outputs"
- Set-up of the BiodivERsA Advisory Board, composed of both scientists and stakeholders, and first meeting of the board
- Launch of a call for tenders for the production of the next series of BiodivERsA Policy briefs
- Updated report on the gaps and priorities for European research on biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Report on foresight views of national agencies and research and policy bodies in Europe
- Report on the existing research infrastructures on biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Preparation of the first BiodivERsA strategic roadmap
- Update of the BiodivERsA database on research projects and programmes

## Regarding BiodivERsA 2015 joint call

- **Early-October 2015:** eligible applicants are invited to submit full proposals
- **Mid-December 2015:** deadline for the submission of full proposals (BiodivERsA 2015 Call)
- **Early June 2016:** list of projects selected for funding published

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