

The European Biodiversity Partnership (Biodiversa+)

– Executive Summary –

Biodiversity, and the benefits it provides, is fundamental to human well-being and a healthy planet. Despite ongoing efforts, biodiversity is deteriorating and this decline would continue under business-as-usual scenarios. As shown by recent assessments, **biodiversity loss is not only an environmental issue, but a developmental, economic, security, social and moral issue as well**. Reports also show that the window of opportunity to act and mitigate the negative impacts is closing fast, and that we need deep systemic changes in policy, society and our economy to reverse the current trends and to secure our life-supporting safety net. These changes should be supported by tangible, larger and more impactful joint R&I actions.

The European Biodiversity Partnership (Biodiversa+) will implement an ambitious programme to help ensure that, by 2030, nature in Europe is back on a path of recovery, and that by 2050 people are living in harmony with Nature (**Fig 1**). It has been co-designed by the European Commission (DG Research & Innovation, and DG Environment).

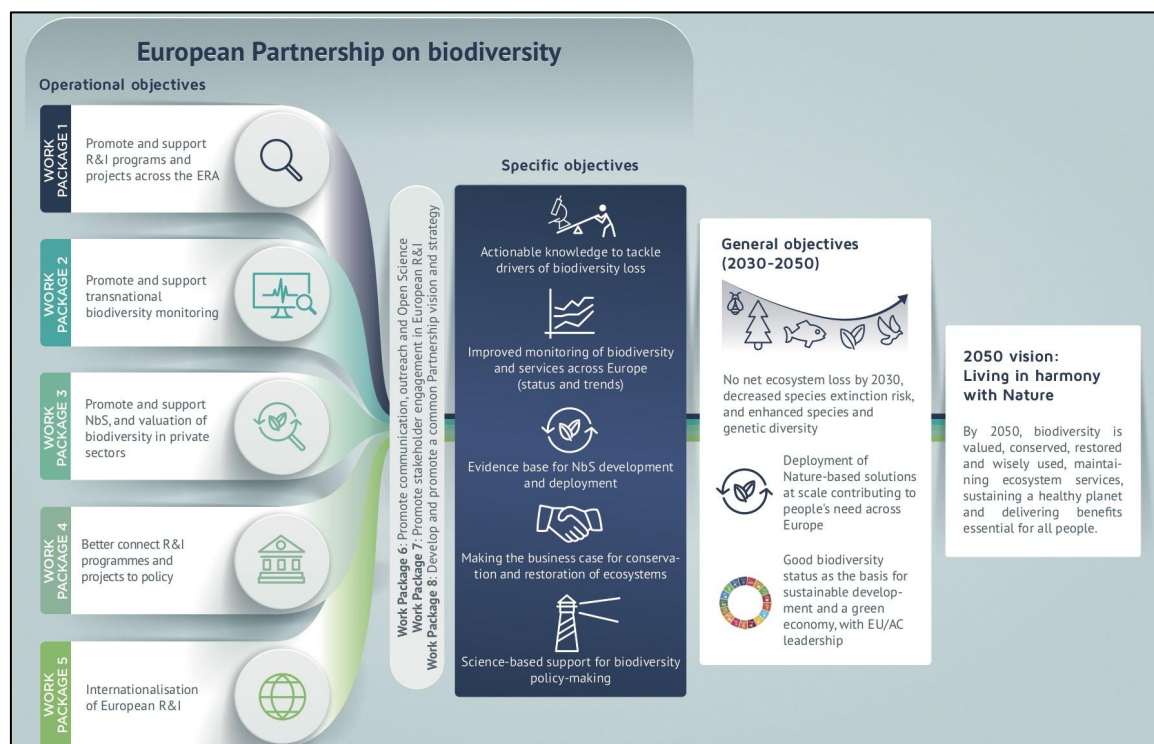


Figure 1 - Summary of the work packages and objectives of Biodiversa+ contributing to the biodiversity goals for 2030 and the 2050 vision of People living in harmony with Nature (R&I: Research and Innovation).

Objectives

Being a part of the European Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 to build the bridge between science, policy and practice, Biodiversa+ gathers 74 research programmers and funders and environmental policy actors from 37 European and associated countries to work on **5 main objectives** along which impact will be generated:

- (Objective 1) **Produce actionable knowledge to tackle the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation**, i.e. knowledge on biodiversity status and dynamics; on drivers, pressures, impacts and responses; on trade-offs and synergies between multiple drivers of biodiversity change; and on teleconnections between world regions; along with assessments of novel tools and approaches to biodiversity/ecosystem conservation and restoration;
- (Objective 2) **Improved monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services across Europe (status and trends)**, The aim is to establish a transnational network of harmonized biodiversity monitoring schemes, building on the work of existing national/regional monitoring schemes and initiatives (such as MAES, and EuropaBON), addressing major priorities, tightly linked to the R&I ecosystem while efficiently informing the policy arena;
- (Objective 3) **Expand and improve the evidence base, accelerate development and wide deployment of Nature-based Solutions (NbS), and assess the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of NbS** against conventional solutions to meet societal challenges. The aim is to meet such challenges in a sustainable and resilient way, while enhancing biodiversity. The Partnership will as a core activity promote the deployment and uptake of *type 1* NbS (largely based on conservation and restoration), possibly in relation with the Partnership on Blue Economy and Water4All. It will also promote deployment and uptake of NbS from *type 2* and *type 3* (based on higher levels of intervention on ecosystems) possibly in collaboration with the Partnerships on Agro-Ecology Living Labs and on Driving Urban Transitions, respectively;
- (Objective 4) **Making the business case for biodiversity**, by contributing science-based methodologies and standards to account for and value ecosystem services and the natural capital, and to assess the dependency and impact of businesses on biodiversity. The intention is to work on a few sectors and demonstrate how adequately valuing and mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into practices can make a difference in the way these sectors contribute to protect and restore biodiversity; this should align with the UN System of Environmental Economic Accounting;
- (Objective 5) **Science-based support for EU, Member States and associated countries policy-making**, including for strengthening environmental policies and laws, and improving cross-sectoral links with other European sectoral policies. More generally, R&I will be better linked to the policy arena (national, EU and international), providing greater input into policy making and improving the assessment of policy efficiency. For this, close collaborations with the EC Knowledge Center for Biodiversity (EC KCBD) and its scientific pillar (i.e. the Science Service) are foreseen.

Work Packages

Delivering on these ambitious objectives requires implementation of a portfolio of activities, structured around Work Packages (**Fig 2**):

- (Work Package 1) Promote and support R&I programs and projects across the ERA to tackle specific issues of major importance. The ambition for this 7-year Partnership is to **launch 6 co-funded joint calls**, each gathering on average >45 Mio€ in cash (total cost of 88 Mio€) to support R&I,
- (Work Package 2): Promote and support transnational biodiversity monitoring, by building a transnational network of **harmonized biodiversity monitoring schemes** on common priorities for the Biodiversa+ members, which would reinforce the survey of habitats, protected areas, insects, invasive alien species and health-related biodiversity facets.
- (Work Package 3): Promote and support **design and implementation of NbS**, and valuation of biodiversity in some private sectors
- (Work Package 4): Better connect R&I programmes and projects to policy, in particular through active fora, brokerage and **transfer of science-based knowledge to policy**, and the science-based support to policy evaluation and policy design

- (Work Package 5): **Internationalisation** of European R&I, including by increasing collaboration with non-ERA countries, better engagement of European R&I actors with international science-policy platforms (such as IPBES and IPCC), and aligning R&I joint programming with the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

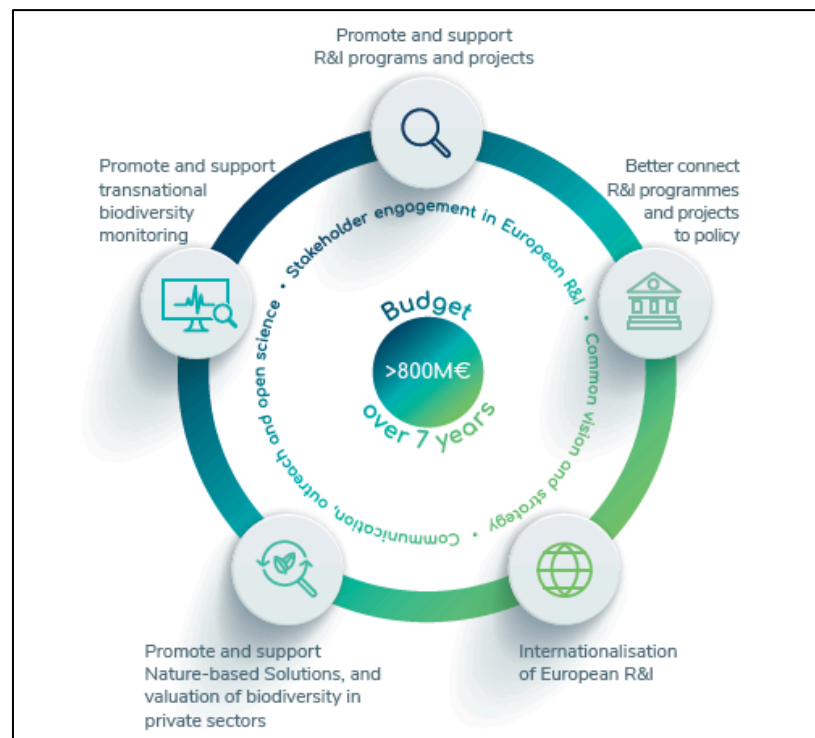


Figure 2 – Biodiversa+: 74 partners from 37 countries gathered to boost the excellence of biodiversity research, engage with stakeholders, and put Europe’s biodiversity on a path of recovery over the next decade

Activities will be **enabled** through approaches ensuring implementation in a collaborative and inclusive way by promoting stakeholders at all relevant levels and sectors (‘Stakeholder Engagement’ – Work Package 6), and continuously communicating and promoting outreach in an open manner (‘Communication, Outreach and Open science’ – Work Package 7). Furthermore, they will be **guided** by a common vision and roadmap amongst all Partners and the European Commission (Work Package 8).

Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA)

The broad R&I priority topics that will guide the activities are defined in the **Biodiversa+ Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA)**, established through an extensive co-design process. Its themes (**Fig. 3**) are strongly aligned with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, are groundbreaking for science, are action-oriented (impact for society and policy), have the ability to promote synergies between sectors/actors/policies, are complementary to other parts of Horizon Europe, and contribute to the EU long-term strategic research and innovation agenda. The SRIA will be typically updated every 3-4 years.

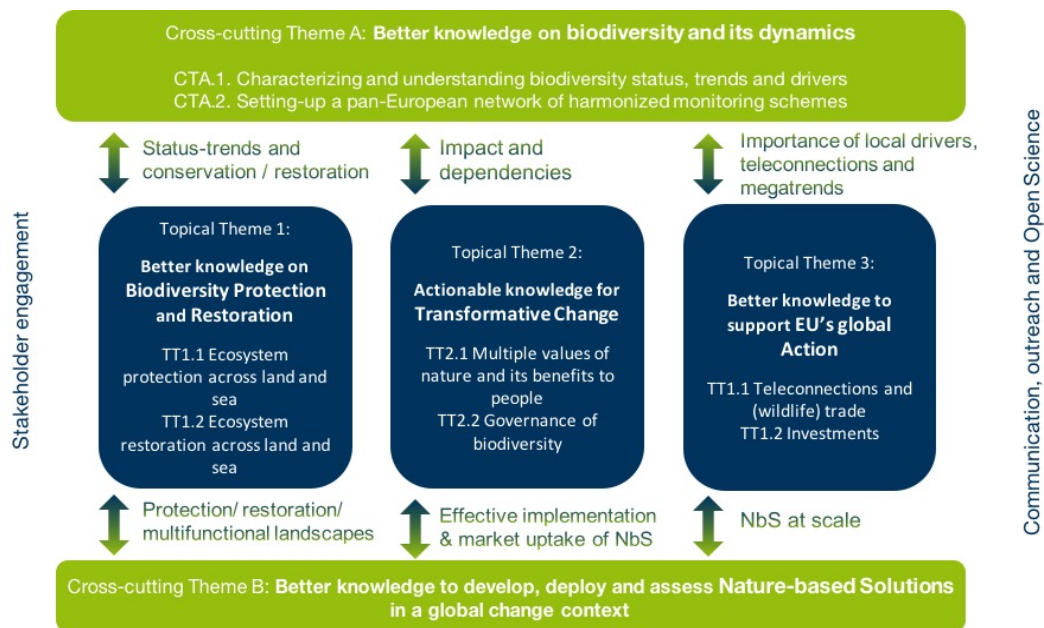


Figure 3 - The Biodiversa+ SRIA identifies three Topical Themes and associated knowledge needs, and two Cross-cutting Themes that are relevant to all the Topical Themes. These themes will not necessarily directly translate into specific Flagship Programmes and/or calls for projects, as these could correspond to a combination of Topical and Cross-cutting Themes.

Flagship Programmes

As a concrete way forward to implement the SRIA, **multi-annual Flagship Programmes** will be launched (1-2 per year) to tackle thematic issues through the wide portfolio of activities described above. Flagship Programmes can thus hold a joint call for research proposals (especially for those topics that need to be advanced through new knowledge) but this is not a requirement, knowing that we will launch only one joint call per year. Flagship Programmes can have different durations, and several will thus run in parallel. Synergies amongst Flagship Programmes will be highly promoted (e.g. through clustering activities) to better understand and highlight interlinkages between biodiversity and other challenges. After the 7 years of the Partnership, the entire collection of Flagship Programmes shall have covered the main topics of the SRIA, and jointly deliver on the ambition of the Partnership.

Impact on society

Through its membership and governance, the Partnership will promote tighter collaboration between national/local and European policy makers in charge of biodiversity and related issues, including environmental agencies, and R&I policy makers and R&I programme funders. The Partnership will provide an overarching platform fostering seamless collaboration and exchange amongst relevant actors (scientific community, public authorities, businesses, citizens, societal actors, NGOs etc.) at appropriate levels and scales. This in turn will help and support citizens, policy makers and businesses in taking adequate action at European, national and local level. The Partnership will build critical mass in capacity, resources and expertise across countries/EU, across R&I and monitoring, and across science/society/policy, which reaches far beyond the achievements of traditional actions through national or Framework Programmes. The Partnership will also further increase synergies between existing initiatives to avoid duplication, validate previous investments and harness existing expertise.

Overall, this Partnership will address the drivers and consequences of biodiversity loss, many of which are of transboundary nature. It will increase science-based support to action on the ground and policymaking, contributing to a sustainable ecological transition in Europe. Anchored in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the SDGs, and the EU Biodiversity strategy 2030, the Partnership will contribute to the implementation of the European Green Deal, and the global 'New Deal for Nature and People' under the Convention on Biological Diversity