

STUDY

Assessing Restoration in the EU

A Comparative Analysis towards CBD Target 2

Table of Contents

Preface 3

Executive Summary 4

1. **Introduction** 7

2. Research Approach – Methodology 10

3. IPBES Assessments and Their Relevance to KMGBF Target 2 11

3.1 The IPBES Nexus Assessment 11

3.2 The IPBES Transformative Change Assessment 15

3.3 Synthesis 19

4. Country profiles of selected CBD Parties from the European Union 21

4.1. Czech Republic 22

4.2. Finland 30

4.3. Germany 36

4.4. Italy 42

4.5. The Netherlands 48

4.6. Poland 55

4.7. Portugal 66

4.8. Spain 73

5. Best practice examples from across Europe 78

6. Key findings and policy recommendations 85

6.1 Key Findings 85

6.2 Policy Recommendations 89

6.3 Conclusion 92

Preface

Restoring degraded ecosystems is essential to achieving the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This is particularly true for Europe, where centuries of intensive land and resource use have left few ecosystems untouched. Protecting what remains will not be enough: Europe must restore ecosystem condition, functioning and connectivity at scale.

Restoration is a strategic investment in human well-being, prosperity and security. Healthy ecosystems secure water, store carbon, reduce flood and heat risks, support food production and strengthen climate resilience. The IPBES assessments show that restoration can benefit biodiversity, water, food, health and climate, but will only succeed if governments also address the policies, incentives and land-use practices driving degradation.

The EU Nature Restoration Law provides one of the world's most advanced legal frameworks for implementing Target 2. It sets binding objectives and requires every Member State to prepare a National Restoration Plan. Implemented ambitiously, it can become an international model for turning global commitments into measurable action.

Supported by the Allianz Foundation, this report compares restoration policy and implementation in eight EU Member States at the midpoint of the Global Biodiversity Framework's implementation period and the start of implementing the EU Nature Restoration Law. It examines national commitments and the evidence that they are delivering ecological recovery at the required scale and pace.

The findings reveal progress and delays, innovative approaches and financing gaps, administrative preparations and weaknesses in implementation and monitoring. Yet the Global Biodiversity Framework and EU Nature Restoration Law remain landmark achievements in challenging times for international cooperation. Their success depends not only on turning commitments into action but also on an open stakeholder dialogue across borders, based on science-based, trustworthy information, free civil society and accountability of governments.

I hope this report will support that effort. I thank the Allianz Foundation for its support, as well as our lead author, Sebastian Amler, and colleagues across the BirdLife International network who contributed their expertise.

Konstantin Kreiser
Conservation Director, NABU – BirdLife Partner in Germany

Executive Summary

This report examines progress towards Target 2 of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) in eight EU Member States: Czechia, Finland, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain. It analyses – AI supported – the Seventh National Reports (7NR), National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and related policy documents, complemented by assessments from NGO experts, primarily from the BirdLife International network. Microsoft Copilot was used to support the analysis of the national reports and the drafting of the country chapters.

The study asks what the reports reveal about implementation, how far national approaches reflect the IPBES Nexus and Transformative Change perspectives, which promising practices exist and how reliably the National Reports capture actual progress.

The analysis, supported by the Allianz Foundation, provides a comparative snapshot rather than a comprehensive audit. Definitions, indicators and reporting structures differ between countries, and several National Restoration Plans were incomplete or yet unavailable. The NGO evidence also varies in scope. Nevertheless, a consistent picture emerges.

Key findings

1. Restoration has gained political prominence, but implementation is not yet occurring at the scale and pace required.

All eight countries have restoration policies, programmes, planning processes or individual projects. Governments are developing National Restoration Plans, governance structures, indicators and ecosystem-specific programmes. Germany, for example, has developed a comparatively strong federal–state coordination and participation process as well as a robust project-financing structure provided by the "Arbeitsprogramm natürlicher Klimaschutz (ANK)". Other countries provide promising examples in river, wetland, peatland, marine and landscape restoration. However, the available evidence does not demonstrate that any of the countries is delivering restoration at the pace and scale required by Target 2. Even comparatively advanced countries acknowledge insufficient resources, limited coverage or slow implementation.

2. A persistent gap exists between political and administrative preparation and measurable ecological recovery.

The 7th National Reports commonly describe objectives, strategies, institutions, stakeholder processes, funding programmes and individual projects. They provide much less consistent evidence on how much degraded area is under effective restoration, how spatial and sectoral priorities are developed, whether ecosystem condition and connectivity have improved, whether gains are additional and permanent, and whether they outweigh continuing degradation.

Germany illustrates this distinction particularly clearly. Its planning and governance process is comparatively advanced, but its official “on track” assessment is based mainly on coordination, participation and data collection rather than consolidated evidence of national ecological outcomes. Finland provides stronger quantitative information and monitoring yet explicitly concludes that progress remains too slow and restoration insufficiently resourced.

3. National reporting is stronger at documenting activities than actual outputs and ecological outcomes.

Existing plans and programs, projects implemented or barriers removed are important indicators, but they do not in themselves demonstrate ecological recovery. Credible assessment requires a results chain or theory of change connecting the baseline condition of degraded ecosystems with spatial priorities, interventions, additionality, ecological integrity, connectivity, permanence and long-term outcomes.

Reporting methods differ substantially between countries. Similar official progress assessments may therefore rest on very different evidence: planning processes in one country, implemented measures or ecological monitoring in another. This limits comparability and risks overstating collective progress.

4. Restoration gains are rarely assessed alongside continuing degradation.

Land conversion, peatland drainage, intensive agriculture and forestry, pollution, infrastructure development and hydromorphological modification continue to place ecosystems under pressure. Italy’s land-use data, for example, show that newly converted land substantially exceeds the area returned from artificial to non-artificial use. Finland reports significant restoration programmes while also acknowledging continued peatland drainage and other land-use pressures.

Restoration cannot deliver a net recovery of nature if gains are offset by degradation elsewhere. Target 2 reporting must therefore move from counting measures towards assessing net changes in ecosystem extent and condition.

5. NGO assessments are generally more critical than government reporting.

NGO experts recognise effective programmes, improved governance and stronger monitoring systems. However, they consistently identify insufficient scale, inadequate financing, weak spatial prioritisation, limited outcome evidence and continuing degradation from other sectors. The divergence is greatest where governments interpret planning progress or programme activity as evidence that they are on track.

6. The IPBES Nexus perspective is increasingly recognised but rarely operationalised.

National strategies connect restoration with climate adaptation, water management, food systems, health and disaster-risk reduction. Peatland, wetland, river and catchment restoration offer particularly strong opportunities for multiple benefits. Yet these links rarely determine spatial priorities, joint financing or integrated monitoring. Agriculture, forestry, water, infrastructure, energy and spatial planning continue to operate largely through separate policy and funding systems.

7. Transformative change remains the weakest dimension.

Most national approaches focus on restoration projects, programmes and administrative structures. Far fewer address the economic incentives, harmful subsidies, sectoral policies and land-use decisions that continue to cause degradation. Restoration programmes cannot create lasting net recovery if other policies continue to damage ecosystems at an equal or greater scale.

Priorities for action

The findings point to five priorities:

- **Move from planning to delivery:** National Restoration Plans need spatially explicit priorities, measurable milestones, clear responsibilities, sufficient financing and implementation pathways.
- **Measure ecological outcomes and net recovery:** Monitoring must assess ecosystem condition, integrity, connectivity, additionality and permanence, while accounting for continuing degradation.
- **Secure adequate long-term public finance:** The next EU Multiannual Financial Framework should provide dedicated funding for biodiversity restoration, maintain a strong standalone LIFE programme and integrate restoration needs into agricultural, regional, cohesion, marine and climate funding.
- **Align sectoral policies and incentives:** Agriculture, forestry, water, infrastructure, energy and spatial planning must support restoration, while biodiversity-harmful subsidies and investments are phased out.
- **Strengthen integrated and adaptive governance:** Shared spatial priorities, compatible indicators, meaningful participation and transparent conflict-resolution mechanisms are needed to connect restoration with wider policy decisions.

The chapter **“Key Findings and Policy Recommendations”** presents the comparative evidence and recommendations in greater detail.

Europe does not lack restoration knowledge, legal ambition or promising practice. What it lacks most is implementation at the necessary speed and scale, supported by sufficient finance, coherent policies and reliable evidence of ecological outcomes. The years to 2030 must mark the transition from plans and individual projects to measurable ecosystem recovery across European landscapes.

1. Introduction

In 2022, the pathbreaking “Global Biodiversity Agreement” (Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, KMGBF) was adopted in Montreal at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The 186 Parties agreed on the goal of halting biodiversity loss by 2030 and initiating a reversal of the trend by 2025 (“To take urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss to put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of people and planet”). The agreement comprises **23 targets for 2030 and four overarching goals for 2050**.

The year 2026 marks a crucial milestone on the path towards the 2030 targets. At the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17), a stocktake is to be conducted on the basis of the so-called “Global Report”, and a “Global Review” is expected to result in a recommendation on how the remaining years can best be used to still achieve the agreement’s targets.

The “Global Report” is part of a new implementation and review mechanism adopted at COP15 (2022) and is the first comprehensive global interim report. Compiled by the CBD Secretariat, it is based primarily on the Parties’ Seventh National Reports (7NRs) as its main source of information, their revised National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), and additional scientific and policy sources, as well as data from civil society, including NGOs and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). By March 2026, 125 countries had submitted their 7NRs, representing approximately two thirds of the Parties to the CBD.

The Global Report first examines the status and trends in the state of nature derived from the reported data sources and subsequently analyses the collective implementation of all 23 KMGBF targets. It addresses not only specific conservation measures, but also the structural conditions required for their implementation: finance, capacity-building, technology and knowledge transfer, governance, monitoring and data, as well as the involvement of business, civil society, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women

and young people. The decisive shift is from individual conservation measures towards a whole-of-society and whole-of-government transformation.

The central finding is mixed: global biodiversity policy has gained considerable momentum since 2022, yet the world remains off track to achieve the 2030 targets collectively. Although national targets demonstrate a clear political commitment, taken together they fall well short of the scope and ambition of the globally agreed targets. Finance, capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer have also increased, but not rapidly enough to enable the necessary transformation. Significant shortcomings in governance, policy coherence and data availability remain. At the same time, the report explicitly stresses that progress can be observed across all 23 targets and that implementation is being advanced not only by governments, but also by cities, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, NGOs, science, businesses, the financial sector and other actors.

The Global Report shows that the world has made considerably more political progress on biodiversity conservation than it had only a few years ago. In practice, however, we remain far from implementing the agreed targets at the necessary speed and scale. The gap between ambition and implementation is therefore becoming the central issue for COP17: business as usual is not enough.

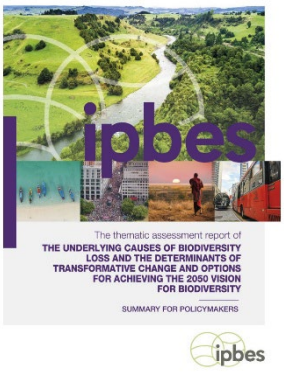
For Europe, Target 2 of the Global Biodiversity Framework on the restoration of degraded ecosystems is of particular importance. Unlike many countries in the Global South, Europe has few, if any, untouched natural landscapes remaining: ecosystems have been altered across almost the entire continent and have often been ecologically degraded and deprived of important functions. It is therefore not enough to protect the remaining near-natural areas. Restoring biodiversity and ecosystem functions must become a priority. At the same time, the climate crisis makes ecosystem restoration increasingly urgent in order to restore their functions as carbon and water stores, sources of cooling and flood protection, and a key to food security.

As part of the landmark European Green Deal, the European Parliament and the governments of the Member States adopted the EU Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR, or “EU Nature Restoration Law”) in 2024. It can be regarded as an implementation of Target 2 of the Global Biodiversity Framework, although there are differences in definition:

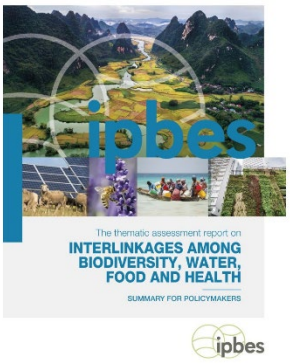


Aspect	KMGBF Target 2	EU Nature Restoration Law
Core objective	At least 30% of all degraded terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine ecosystems under effective restoration measures by 2030.	Restoration of specified ecosystems and habitat types in accordance with binding EU requirements. Measures covering at least 20% of the EU's land and sea area by 2030, and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.
Target metric	Share of degraded ecosystems	Share of specified habitats and ecosystem indicators
Reference value	Degraded ecosystems overall	Habitat types and ecosystems defined under EU law
Monitoring	KMGBF Indicator 2.1 "Area under Restoration"	Comprehensive EU monitoring with sector-specific indicators
Governance	Largely at national discretion	Detailed requirements for planning, reporting and review
2030 deadline	At least 30% of the degraded area by 2030	Several sectoral targets for 2030, 2040 and 2050

As an EU regulation, the Nature Restoration Regulation must be implemented directly by all Member States. To this end, each Member State first prepares a National Restoration Plan (NRP), which must be approved by the European Commission. Despite the stipulated deadline (September 2026), these plans were available for only some Member States at the editorial cut-off date of this study and could therefore not be included in the report's analysis.



Advancing the restoration of degraded nature requires systemic change and mainstreaming, meaning the integration of nature conservation into other economic sectors and policy portfolios. This is the key conclusion of the Nexus Assessment published by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). It identifies biodiversity restoration as one of the most effective "Nexus Response Options" (IPBES 2024). The IPBES Transformative Change Assessment is also particularly relevant to restoration because it raises the question: What changes in the economy, politics and societal power relations are needed to ensure that nature can be protected and restored permanently (IPBES 2024)? A restoration measure such as reconnecting an oxbow lake to a river can be ecologically effective. Whether it endures in the long term also depends on how land use, finance, property rights and the interests of local people are governed.



Sources:

CBD (2026). The State of Biodiversity Action: Global Report on collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (eds.). CBD Secretariat, Montreal, Canada.

European Commission (2019). The European Green Deal. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. COM(2019) 640 final. European Commission, Brussels, Belgium.

IPBES (2024). Thematic Assessment Report on the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food and Health of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Harrison, P. A., McElwee, P. D., and van Huysen, T. L. (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany.

IPBES (2024). Thematic Assessment Report on the Underlying Causes of Biodiversity Loss and the Determinants of Transformative Change and Options for Achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. O'Brien, K., Garibaldi, L., and Agrawal, A. (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany

2. Research Approach – Methodology

This analysis seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What can be inferred from the National Reports of the eight selected EU Member States about the status of implementation of Target 2 of the Global Biodiversity Framework?
2. To what extent are the National Reports and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) of the countries examined aligned with the "Nexus approach" formulated by IPBES?
3. Which best-practice examples can already be identified?
4. How informative are the National Reports with regard to Target 2?

Questions 1, 2 and 4 are answered in the form of country profiles, while Question 3 is addressed in a cross-country chapter.

The Parties selected for analysis—all of which are EU Member States (Czechia, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain)—were chosen primarily on the basis of geographical distribution, broad representation of different national challenges, and the availability of NGO experts for validation.

The main evidence base for answering the questions is an AI-assisted analysis, conducted using Copilot, of the following documents, with a focus in each case on the aspects most relevant to Target 2:

- Seventh National Reports (7NRs) of the CBD Parties examined (EU Member States), retrieved from the CBD Online Reporting Tool (https://ort.cbd.int/national-reports)
- NBSAPs of the countries examined, retrieved from the CBD Online Reporting Tool where available (https://ort.cbd.int/nbsaps)
- IPBES Nexus Assessment
- IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

Microsoft Copilot was used to support the analysis of the national reports and the drafting of the country chapters.

At the time of publication, National Restoration Plans had unfortunately not yet been published for all countries. They could therefore not be included in the analysis. Subsequently, interviews were conducted for validation with experts from NABU partner organisations (generally from the BirdLife International network). These interviews also specifically asked about best-practice examples.

Based on the analysis, country profiles were prepared and structured as follows:

a. Focus analysis of the National Report on Target 2
b. NGO statements on the report and implementation status of Target 2
c. Cross-check with ideas of the IPBES Assessments
d. Overall assessment

3. IPBES Assessments and Their Relevance to KMGBF Target 2

3.1 The IPBES Nexus Assessment

The Nexus Assessment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), adopted by the IPBES Plenary in 2024, examines the interactions among the five "Nexus elements"—biodiversity, water, food, health and climate change—as interwoven components of a shared system. It was prepared by 165 experts from all regions of the world and draws on around 6,500 scientific publications as well as Indigenous and local knowledge. The assessment builds particularly on the 2019 IPBES Global Assessment and broadens its perspective to include the systemic interconnections among different environmental and societal domains.

The assessment shows that the five Nexus elements are connected through close interactions, interdependencies, cascading, reinforcing and feedback effects. Biodiversity is a fundamental basis for the provision of water and food, human health and climate stability. Changes in one Nexus element can affect several others. Positive developments can create synergies, whereas deterioration in one element can intensify negative effects in other areas. Nevertheless, the underlying challenges continue to be addressed largely on a sectoral and isolated basis. Decisions in agriculture, water, energy, health, nature conservation or climate policy often fail to consider effects on other Nexus elements adequately. This can lead to maladaptation, unintended trade-offs and missed synergies. The causes of these failures lie not only in individual policy decisions, but also in overarching indirect drivers such as economic and technological developments, consumption and production patterns, institutional structures and societal values.

The assessment therefore describes the current trajectory as characterised by interconnected pressures. Biodiversity loss, climate change, changes in land and sea use,

overexploitation of natural resources and pollution interact and simultaneously affect water availability and quality, food systems and human health. These pressures and the resulting risks are unevenly distributed. Developing states, small island developing states, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and people in particularly vulnerable situations are disproportionately affected.

Development Pathways

In addition to current interactions, the assessment examines possible future development pathways. It evaluates 186 scenarios from 52 studies that consider interactions among at least three Nexus elements. Most scenarios extend to 2050 or 2100. The results show that different societal and political development pathways can lead to markedly different outcomes for biodiversity and the other Nexus elements.

A central finding is that sustainable development cannot be achieved by optimising individual sectors. In particular, climate-change mitigation measures can create trade-offs with biodiversity, water or food where they compete for land or other resources. Integrated planning can reduce such conflicts.

The assessment shows that future development depends substantially on whether existing systems and policy approaches are transformed or existing development pathways continue. Considering interactions at an early stage increases the opportunity to harness positive feedbacks and synergies and to avoid long-term trade-offs.

Response Options and Synergies

To shape sustainable development, the assessment identifies a large number of response options that are already available. Seventy-one response options were assessed in detail, including measures to protect and restore ecologically intact ecosystems, manage land, water and marine resources sustainably, promote sustainable food systems, and reduce pollution and resource consumption.

A central insight is that measures not primarily focused on biodiversity can in some cases have greater positive effects on biodiversity than conventional biodiversity-specific measures. Their design, context and scale of implementation are decisive. The measures involve different synergies and trade-offs and should therefore not be considered in isolation.

Bundles of measures in which different options are implemented jointly or build on one another are particularly relevant. The assessment cites, for example, the combination of sustainable and healthy diets, reductions in food loss and waste, sustainable or ecological intensification of agriculture, and ecosystem restoration. Such combinations can simultaneously reduce pressure on land and water pollution, promote biodiversity, improve human health and lower greenhouse-gas emissions.

The potential impact extends beyond individual policy areas. Taken together, the 71 assessed response options can contribute to achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, all 23 targets of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the long-term mitigation and adaptation goals of the Paris Agreement. Twenty-four of the assessed options each support more than five SDGs and more than five Global Biodiversity Framework targets.

Governance and Institutional Requirements

According to the assessment, harnessing these synergies requires a fundamental change in governance structures. The currently fragmented and sectoral institutional structures are only partly capable of addressing complex and interconnected challenges. Short-term, contradictory or non-integrated policies can hinder achievement of international sustainability goals.

The assessment therefore recommends integrated, inclusive, equitable, coordinated and adaptive Nexus governance. This should bring together different actors and levels, align sectoral policies more closely, and explicitly address questions of equity and responsibility. Governance should also become more experimental and learning-oriented so that measures can be continuously monitored, evaluated and adjusted where necessary. Integrating different knowledge systems and involving Indigenous Peoples and local communities are particularly important.

The assessment proposes an eight-step roadmap for this purpose. It ranges from analysing the respective Nexus context and its direct and indirect drivers, identifying relevant actors, jointly developing visions and assessing response options, through to implementation, scaling, and continuous monitoring and learning. Decision-support tools, knowledge and data foundations, and participatory processes should accompany the entire process.

Financing and Economic Conditions

Changes in economic and financial conditions are a key structural prerequisite for transformation. The assessment points to a substantial misallocation of finance: existing economic and financial systems currently provide around 35 times more funding for economic activities that directly harm biodiversity than for activities that support it. At the same time, the estimated annual biodiversity-finance gap is between USD 0.3 trillion and USD 1 trillion.

The challenge is therefore not only to mobilise additional resources for biodiversity and other Nexus areas, but also to align existing financial flows and economic incentive systems with sustainable outcomes. This includes reviewing biodiversity-harmful subsidies, accounting for environmental and health costs that have so far been externalised, and improving financing conditions for developing countries. Existing debt problems and high financing costs, in particular, can impede sustainable transitions.

Overall Assessment and Significance

The Nexus Assessment makes clear that biodiversity loss, climate change, and water, food and health issues cannot be treated as separate policy fields. The principal challenge is not primarily a lack of possible solutions, but the systematic consideration of their interactions and their coordinated, equitable and large-scale implementation.

For international biodiversity policy, it is especially relevant that the assessment places implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework within a broader transformation context. Achieving the biodiversity targets can simultaneously contribute to the SDGs and the goals of the Paris Agreement if measures are planned and implemented across sectors. Conversely, isolated measures in other policy fields can undermine biodiversity targets. The Nexus Assessment thus provides a scientific basis for greater coherence among biodiversity, climate, water, food and health policy.

Overall, the assessment calls for a shift from predominantly sectoral steering towards an integrated Nexus approach that deliberately harnesses synergies, considers trade-offs at an early stage and understands social equity as an integral part of sustainable transformation. The central policy implication is not merely to optimise individual measures, but to align policies, financial flows, governance structures and societal development pathways more closely with shared sustainable outcomes.

Conclusions for Target 2 of the Global Biodiversity Framework

The IPBES Nexus Assessment provides an important scientific basis for implementing Target 2. Its central insight is that restoration should not be viewed solely as a nature-conservation measure, but as a strategic lever for addressing several global challenges simultaneously across biodiversity, climate, water, food and health.

The assessment shows that ecosystem restoration is among the response options capable of generating particularly strong positive interactions (“Nexus synergies”). Restoration measures not only improve biodiversity and ecosystem condition, but can also enhance water quality and availability, increase climate resilience, store carbon, support sustainable food systems and promote human health. Target 2 therefore has significance far beyond achieving biodiversity-policy objectives alone.

At the same time, the assessment shows that successful restoration depends substantially on its integration into coherent policy approaches. Restoration has its greatest impact when implemented together with other measures, such as sustainable land and water use, pollution reduction, sustainable food systems or nature-based climate action. Isolated restoration projects may fail to realise their full potential and can even create new trade-offs, for example where competition for land arises or social considerations are insufficiently addressed.

For implementation of Target 2, this means that restoration should increasingly be understood as part of comprehensive transformation processes. Successful restoration requires cross-sectoral planning, close links among biodiversity, climate, water, health and agricultural policy, and the involvement of relevant societal actors. Equally important are appropriate financing mechanisms and governance structures that enable long-term implementation and evaluation of success.

From the perspective of the Nexus Assessment, Target 2 is therefore not merely one biodiversity target among many, but a central instrument for achieving several internationally agreed sustainability goals at the same time. Restoring degraded ecosystems can make a significant contribution to implementation of the entire Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the mitigation and adaptation goals of the Paris Agreement.

The assessment thus supports the conclusion that investment in restoration is among the most effective and efficient measures for strengthening ecological, social and economic resilience over the long term.

For the present study, the resulting question is whether the Parties analysed follow a holistic approach in implementation and reporting on implementation, as called for in the Nexus Assessment with respect to ecosystem restoration.

3.2 The IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

The IPBES Transformative Change Assessment was initiated by decision of the IPBES Plenary and adopted in 2024 at the eleventh IPBES Plenary in Windhoek. It builds on the 2019 IPBES Global Assessment and was prepared particularly with a view to implementing the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and realising the 2050 Vision of "Living in Harmony with Nature". Whereas the Global Assessment identified the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, the Transformative Change Assessment focuses on their underlying causes, barriers to change, and concrete strategies and response options for transformative change. The assessment is based on almost 400 case studies and around 7,000 sources.

Transformative change is defined not only by the scale of a measure, but by its direction and quality and its capacity to alter the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and nature decline. Transformation can be initiated by both small and large changes and can develop incrementally. What matters is that fundamental, system-wide change results. The assessment groups changes relevant to transformation into three interconnected areas: **perspectives, structures and practices**.

- Perspectives encompass mindsets, knowledge, values and worldviews.
- Structures concern organisation, regulation and governance.

- Practices encompass actions, behaviours and relationships. Sustainable transformation occurs especially when changes in all three areas are connected.

The starting point is the finding that currently dominant perspectives, structures and practices often not only fail to prevent biodiversity loss but reproduce its underlying causes. The assessment identifies three particularly central and interconnected causes:

- **disconnection from and domination over nature and people**
- **the concentration of power and wealth**
- **the prioritisation of short-term, individual and material gains**.

These patterns shape and reinforce the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss while also impeding necessary change.

This shifts the focus from addressing individual causes of biodiversity loss towards changing the systems that generate those causes. Unsustainable production and consumption patterns, economic incentive structures, concentrations of power, institutional routines and societal norms thus become as relevant as conventional nature-conservation measures.

Core Principles and Enabling Conditions

The assessment identifies four core principles for deliberately shaped transformative change: equity and justice, pluralism and inclusion, respectful and reciprocal human–nature relationships, and adaptive learning and action. These principles are intended to ensure that transformation is not only ecologically effective but also socially legitimate and equitable. Because far-reaching change can create winners and losers, distributional effects and potential conflicts among different actors must be addressed explicitly.

Different values and knowledge systems play a central role, especially the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Their perspectives, practices and governance approaches are often grounded in care, reciprocity and close relationships between people and nature. The assessment emphasises that these knowledge systems are not merely supplementary sources of information, but can make independent contributions to shaping transformative processes.

Strategies for Transformative Change

The assessment identifies five complementary core strategies that together have considerable potential for transformative change. They address different levels of the underlying causes and should be combined according to context.

First: conserving and regenerating places of value to people and nature. This includes stronger legal protection of biodiversity, recognition of nature's diverse values, regenerative approaches and integrated spatial planning. Particular importance is attached to places where Indigenous Peoples and local communities already contribute successfully to

ecosystem conservation and restoration. They manage or hold rights over a substantial share of protected areas and ecologically intact landscapes worldwide. Supporting such approaches can therefore strengthen biodiversity conservation, cultural diversity and local governance simultaneously.

Second: transforming sectors with particularly high impacts on biodiversity loss. Agriculture and livestock production, fisheries, forestry, infrastructure, mining and fossil energy are particularly relevant. Required measures include more sustainable use of natural resources, regulation of direct exploitation, transformative deployment of technology, financing for sustainable development and support for civil-society initiatives. The urgency also follows from the economy's high dependence on nature: in 2023, more than half of global GDP was generated in economic activities with medium to high dependence on nature.

Third: transforming economic and financial systems. The assessment calls for economic decisions to be aligned more closely with nature, equity and long-term societal well-being. This includes innovative economic-policy instruments, just transitions towards a good quality of life, reforms of financial systems and institutions, and new measures of success that account for ecological, social, cultural and economic dimensions. Unsustainable global supply chains, overproduction and unsustainable consumption patterns should be reduced through coherent regulation and an economy geared more strongly towards sufficiency.

This is linked to changing what counts as economic success. Indicators and evaluation standards should give greater weight to nature, social equity, resilience and sustainability. Integrating nature into national income accounting and financial decisions can help make biodiversity a relevant criterion for public and private investment. At the same time, the assessment notes that many of these instruments are still relatively new and that developing countries in particular require additional technical and financial support.

Fourth: transforming governance systems. Governance should become more inclusive, integrated and accountable. This involves not only better coordination among institutions, but also attention to existing power relations. The assessment explicitly refers to factors such as lobbying, misinformation and corruption that can block transformative change. Participation and decision-making authority for previously marginalised actors should be strengthened in order to alter existing power asymmetries.

Fifth: changing perspectives, values and societal narratives. Transformative change requires stronger recognition of the interconnectedness of people and nature. Cultural narratives, social norms and learning processes can help change previously taken-for-granted unsustainable behaviours. These include consumption and growth norms that reproduce current inequalities and unsustainable relationships with nature. The assessment also emphasises co-production of knowledge and the connection of different worldviews and knowledge systems.

Visions and Transformation Pathways

A key insight of the assessment is the importance of shared positive visions of the future. They give transformative processes direction and enable movement beyond existing development paths and ways of thinking. Visions are particularly effective when they connect intrinsic, relational and instrumental values of nature and incorporate Indigenous and local knowledge. An evaluation of 881 visions identified five recurring themes: regenerative and circular economies, community rights and empowerment, biodiversity and ecosystem health, spiritual reconnection between people and nature, and innovative businesses and technologies.

Transformation is not understood as a linear process. Changes can trigger and reinforce one another, producing cascading transformation processes. Depending on the context, different bundles of economic, legal and governance measures can lead to different desirable futures. At the same time, path dependencies, lock-ins and changing conditions persist. The assessment therefore recommends iterative and reflexive processes in which planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are continuously linked.

The case studies reviewed show that such changes are already taking place. The assessment database examined 391 initiatives. They demonstrate numerous positive effects for nature and people, many of which can occur within less than ten years. At the same time, the cases highlight the importance of cooperation and actor coalitions, since transformative change is typically not driven by individual actors alone.

Barriers and Roles of Actors

The main barriers include existing power and economic structures, institutional path dependencies, dominant societal values and norms, and the concentration of resources and decision-making authority. Situations in which actors benefit from existing structures and therefore have incentives to prevent or delay change are particularly problematic. Inadequate policy coordination, limited capacities and insufficient financing can also impede transformation.

At the same time, the assessment emphasises that all societal groups have a role to play. Governments can create legal and institutional frameworks; businesses can change production and business models; financial actors can redirect capital flows; science and education can provide knowledge and skills; and civil society and social movements can initiate change and influence societal narratives. Indigenous Peoples and local communities also have their own governance and knowledge systems that provide important starting points for sustainable development. Transformation therefore requires not only government action, but broad societal coalitions of actors.

Overall Assessment and Significance

Overall, the Transformative Change Assessment concludes that achieving the 2050 Vision of "Living in Harmony with Nature" cannot be accomplished merely by expanding existing conservation measures. It requires changing the perspectives, structures and practices that systematically generate biodiversity loss. This includes changes in economic and financial systems, sectors with particularly high biodiversity impacts, governance structures, societal values and relationships between people and nature.

The assessment's significance for the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework lies particularly in broadening implementation through a systemic perspective: biodiversity targets require not only concrete conservation and restoration measures, but changes in the conditions under which societal and economic decisions are made. The five strategies—conserving and regenerating places of value, transforming biodiversity-relevant sectors, reshaping economic and financial systems, reforming governance, and changing perspectives and values—form an interconnected framework for action.

Overall, the assessment shows that transformative change is already taking place in different contexts and can yield positive effects for nature and people within relatively short periods. The decisive factor, however, is that changes are not considered in isolation, but are aligned with shared visions, designed equitably and inclusively, and supported by appropriate institutional, economic and societal conditions. Transformation should therefore be understood less as a single policy package than as a long-term, iterative and multi-actor process for changing the fundamental relationships among society, the economy and nature.

For the present study, the resulting question is whether the Parties analysed follow a transformative approach in implementation and reporting on implementation, as described in the Transformative Change Assessment.

3.3 Synthesis

From the combined perspective of both assessments, restoring degraded ecosystems has significance extending beyond conventional nature conservation. **Restoration is not primarily a conservation measure, but a central means of addressing interconnected global challenges and a building block of societal transformation.**

The Nexus Assessment highlights restoration's potential to create synergies among biodiversity, water, climate, food and health. Its significance therefore lies not only in protecting biodiversity, but also in contributing to several sustainability goals. This requires embedding restoration in cross-sectoral bundles of measures. Target 2 should therefore be understood as a key measure contributing to implementation of the Kunming–Montreal

Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), the Sustainable Development Goals, and the mitigation and adaptation goals of the Paris Agreement.

The Transformative Change Assessment complements this perspective by identifying the conditions for successful long-term restoration. Restoration is necessary, but on its own is not sufficient to halt biodiversity loss. Its causes also lie in deeply embedded societal, economic and political structures: unsustainable production and consumption patterns, harmful economic incentives, concentrations of power, institutional routines and short-term profit orientation. As long as these structures persist, restored ecosystems remain at risk of renewed degradation. The assessment therefore calls for fundamental change in the systems that drive nature loss and identifies conserving and regenerating places of value to people and nature as one of its five core transformation strategies.

Such change requires transformation in biodiversity-relevant sectors. Agriculture, fisheries, forestry, infrastructure, mining and energy systems must be designed to reduce pressure on ecosystems. Equally important is inclusive, integrated and accountable governance that enables societal participation, monitoring, learning and adaptive adjustment. Restoration is therefore not only an ecological task, but also an institutional and political one.

It also requires realignment of economic and financial systems. Because current financial flows and incentive systems often promote biodiversity loss, harmful subsidies must be phased out, finance redirected towards nature-positive activities, and economic success aligned more closely with long-term ecological and societal well-being. The decisive task is therefore not only to provide additional resources for restoration projects, but also to eliminate the structural causes of degradation.

Taken together, both assessments show that restoration can create substantial synergies among global sustainability goals but can realise its full potential only as part of comprehensive transformative change. The success of Target 2 is therefore measured not only by the area of restored ecosystems or the number of projects implemented, but also by positive effects extending beyond biodiversity conservation and by accompanying changes in policy, governance, financial systems, and production and consumption patterns. Whereas the Nexus Assessment highlights restoration as a key means of linking global goals, the Transformative Change Assessment demonstrates its importance for changing the systems that cause nature loss. Together, the two assessments thus underscore the strategic significance of Target 2 for implementation of the KMGBF as a whole.

4. Country profiles of selected CBD Parties from the European Union

The following section analyses the country profiles of selected EU Member States. The analysis draws on the Seventh National Reports (7NRs), NBSAPs where available, and the two IPBES assessments, the Nexus Assessment and the Transformative Change Assessment. In addition, the government accounts presented in the National Reports were reviewed using a questionnaire completed by external NGO experts.

For the questionnaires, quotations were extracted from the passages of the 7NRs relevant to Target 2 and used to derive statements to which the NGOs could respond. Each statement could be rated using the following scale:

Strongly Agree - Agree - Disagree - Strongly Disagree - Don't Know.

The quotations and their sources, as well as the statements, are presented transparently in the country reports.

The graphic does not assess political performance or the implementation status of Target 2; rather, it evaluates the quality and robustness of reporting on KMGBF Target 2 in the National Report. The Reporting Strength Graphic assesses the quality of reporting and implementation evidence for KMGBF Target 2 across seven dimensions: ambition, planning, implementation, monitoring, data availability, financing and implementation barriers. Each dimension is scored on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (weak) to 4 (very strong). Scores are based on the level of detail, transparency, evidence quality and demonstrated implementation contained in the National Report and supporting materials.

Score	Meaning
1	Very weak reporting. Essential information is missing. No or hardly any robust evidence.
2	Partial reporting. Relevant information is available, but substantial gaps remain or quantification is lacking.
3	Good reporting. Essential information is documented clearly and is largely supported by evidence.
4	Very strong reporting. Clear baselines, indicators, monitoring, financing and outcomes are documented comprehensively.

4.1. Czech Republic

A) Government statements on the implementation of KMGBF Target 2

The Czech Republic's 7NR describes national implementation of Target 2 primarily in terms of strategic objectives, institutional instruments, new monitoring and indicator approaches, and preparation of the National Restoration Plan (NRP) for submission to the European Commission. The report thus sets out the political and administrative conditions intended to enable restoration. At the same time, however, it largely remains unclear how much land has already been restored, which ecological improvements have been achieved, and how far existing measures actually contribute to meeting the restoration targets by 2030. The report therefore provides information mainly on planning and governance processes, but considerably less on demonstrable ecological outcomes.

The NBSAP provides a broader target architecture encompassing resilience, favourable status, integrity, connectivity and sustainable use. However, it does not close the evidence gaps visible in the NR regarding implementation and impact. Overall, both documents are more informative about policy direction and the institutional approach than about the actual status of target achievement.

Key findings on the level of ambition

The 7NR situates restoration within European and national commitments

The National Report explicitly anchors the restoration of degraded ecosystems in both the European requirements of the Nature Restoration Regulation and the Czech Republic's national biodiversity-policy objectives. Restoration is thus understood not as an isolated conservation measure, but as a central component of a long-term strategy to stabilise biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecological resilience. At the same time, ambition is visible primarily at the strategic level. The report contains no separate national quantification of the Target 2 commitment in terms of area share or hectares, no ecosystem-specific interim targets, and no consistent timeline against which implementation up to 2030 could be assessed. The gap between strategic ambition and operationalised implementation therefore remains substantial.

The NBSAP includes objectives concerning resilience, favourable conservation status, adequate representation, integrity and connectivity. This broad ecological orientation is relevant because it does not reduce restoration to individual projects. Nevertheless, a considerable gap remains between the ambitious description of objectives and the operationalisation of national restoration areas and measures.

Source basis: National Report: PDF pp. 3–5, 9–11; NBSAP: PDF pp. 18–23, 32–37.

Key findings on implementation progress

The National Report refers to spatial-planning instruments, systems of ecological stability, management measures inside and outside protected areas, new indicators for free-flowing rivers, and measures to control invasive alien species. These elements demonstrate that restoration is being addressed across several policy and action areas. However, they do not show how much land is actually under effective restoration or whether ecosystem condition, function and connectivity have improved. Particularly significant is the fact that the NRP is still expected to identify priority areas and thereby establish the basis for calculating Indicator 2.1, Area under restoration. Consideration of the NBSAP provides insight into planned sectoral measures and strategic priorities but cannot replace the evidence—missing from the National Report—of national scaling and ecological outcomes. The principal implementation gaps concern four interconnected areas. First, there is still no transparent spatial prioritisation of the areas where restoration measures are expected to deliver the greatest ecological benefit. Second, it is unclear whether the scale and pace of the measures described are sufficient to achieve the restoration scaling required by 2030. Third, long-term management and maintenance requirements are implicitly assumed but not presented systematically, even though they are crucial to the permanence of restoration gains. Fourth, reporting focuses predominantly on activities, instruments and processes, while robust evidence of actual improvements in ecosystem condition, function and connectivity remains limited. A clear gap therefore persists between documenting measures and demonstrating their ecological effectiveness.

Overall, there is therefore a clear gap between the presentation of policy measures and instruments and evidence of their implementation and ecological impact.

Source basis: National Report: PDF pp. 3–7, 49, 58; NBSAP: PDF pp. 20–26, 32–47.

Key findings on monitoring and data

The NR describes several components of a planned monitoring architecture: information systems, indicators of ecological stability, a new indicator for free-flowing rivers, and Annex data on KMGBF indicators. This infrastructure is a genuine strength because it can provide the basis for repeated data collection, spatial attribution and future progress reporting.

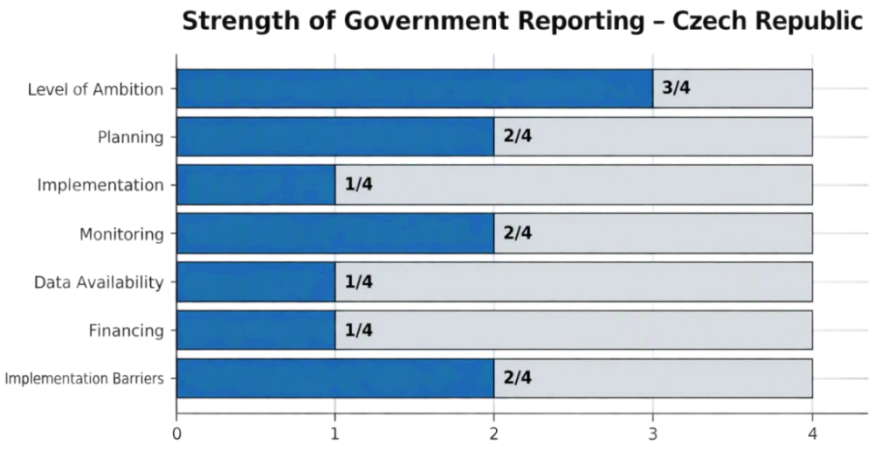
At the same time, the report itself makes clear that no nationally usable value is yet available for the central metric under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation: the area under effective restoration. Nor is such a value available for the central KMGBF Target 2 metric concerning the total area degraded or restored. The relevant areas are to be defined only through the NRP, and several fields are reported as unavailable. What is missing, therefore, is not merely individual data points, but essential elements of a management chain: a nationally consistent baseline, a uniform definition of what counts as “under effective restoration”, a link between project and spatial data, and repeated measurements

of ecological impact. Without these elements, measures can be counted, but their contribution to the 30 per cent target cannot be assessed robustly. Consideration of the NBSAP provides insight into the government's monitoring and evaluation intentions, planned or already implemented indicators, and institutional responsibilities. This additional information improves the prospects for future data collection but does not eliminate the current gap documented in the NR. The implications for Target 2 are substantial: priorities cannot be set transparently according to restoration need and expected impact, deviations from targets cannot be identified early, and resources cannot be redirected on an evidence-based basis.

Source basis: National Report: PDF pp. 5–6, 24, 49–63; NBSAP: PDF pp. 11–18, 29–40, 53–60.

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The NR reveals several interconnected implementation barriers. First, the national implementation framework is still being developed: the current NBSAP is new, the NRP has not yet been completed, and key indicators have not yet been populated. Second, restoration requires coordination across nature conservation, spatial planning, agriculture, water management, forestry, infrastructure and the management of public land. The report refers to instruments in these areas but does not demonstrate consistent joint spatial prioritisation, common outcome indicators or binding conflict-resolution mechanisms. Third, missing spatial and impact data make it more difficult to select cost-effective measures and assess their permanence. The NBSAP contains additional information on funding sources, programmes and implementation mechanisms. However, it does not present a consolidated multiannual financing framework for Target 2 that compares restoration needs, funding already secured, ongoing maintenance costs and the remaining financing gap. It therefore remains unclear whether measures can continue after project-based funding ends, be scaled up at landscape and catchment level, and be adapted in response to ecological results. The barriers reinforce one another: unclear priorities weaken financial planning; insufficiently defined long-term financing limits monitoring and maintenance; and missing data, in turn, make it harder to justify additional funding politically. For Target 2, therefore, the main problem is not a complete absence of instruments, but their incomplete integration into a financed, spatially prioritised and results-oriented implementation programme.



Source basis: National Report: PDF pp. 2–5, 49–60; NBSAP: PDF pp. 6–9, 33–46, 94–106

Key findings on participation

The NR reports the involvement of ministries, public institutions, the scientific community, the private sector, NGOs and other stakeholders in preparing the report. This broadens the process procedurally, but does not yet show the extent or quality of non-state actors' influence over priorities, site selection or resource allocation. The NBSAP adds participatory approaches for strategy development and implementation. For Target 2, however, continuous participation, conflict management with land users, and the integration of monitoring data into joint decisions are only partly specified. Participation is therefore documented, but its effectiveness for implementation and legitimacy is not comprehensively demonstrated.

Source basis: National Report: PDF pp. 2–3; NBSAP: PDF pp. 7, 14, 19–20, 30–36, 81–92.

B) NGO statements on the report and implementation status

The evidence base consists of the completed NGO questionnaire for Czechia and the interview with CSO, BirdLife's partner in the Czech Republic, conducted on 29 September 2026.

Summary of NGO feedback

The evidence base is an interview conducted on 29 September 2026 with an expert from CSO (the BirdLife Partner in the Czech Republic). The NGO assesses the Seventh National Report and progress in implementing Target 2 considerably more critically than the government. Although it acknowledges restoration, connectivity and long-term stability objectives, as well as initial instruments and indicators, these remain largely programmatic: robust area-based targets, prioritised restoration areas, timelines, concrete instruments and long-term financing are lacking. The outstanding National Restoration Plan and the limited scale of measures indicate that Czechia remains predominantly in the planning phase. The NGO particularly confirms the data and evidence gap: national figures on areas under effective restoration and evidence of ecological improvements are absent, meaning that progress and target achievement cannot be assessed reliably. It rejects eight of the nine statements and expressly agrees only with the finding that missing area data substantially limit progress assessment. New indicators and non-binding references to invasive alien species are not regarded as evidence of implementation. The actual influence of participation and the availability of sustainable financing also remain unsubstantiated.

Key findings on the level of ambition

The NGO assesses the overall direction of Czech restoration policy considerably more critically than the government. Although restoration, ecological connectivity and the long-

term stability of ecosystems are recognised as important objectives, the NGO identifies substantial shortcomings in their operationalisation. In particular, it considers robust area-based targets, prioritised restoration areas, verifiable timelines and concrete implementation instruments to be lacking. Ambition is therefore assessed not on the basis of the general description of objectives, but in light of the absence of concrete specification.

Key findings on implementation progress

The NGO assesses the actual state of implementation considerably more negatively than the government report suggests. It is particularly critical of the incomplete NRP, the lack of prioritisation of restoration areas, and the current scale of restoration measures both inside and outside protected areas. In the NGO's assessment, Czechia remains predominantly in a planning and preparatory phase. Although positive developments are acknowledged, they are not considered sufficient evidence of large-scale and effective restoration.

Key findings on monitoring and data

The strongest agreement between the 7NR and the NGO concerns the assessment of the data situation. The NGO explicitly confirms that sufficient national data on the area under restoration are currently unavailable. As a result, neither progress nor target achievement can be assessed robustly. From the NGO's perspective, this is not merely a technical problem but a central implementation weakness, because prioritisation, resource allocation and impact monitoring are possible only to a limited extent without a robust evidence base.

NGO ratings of individual statements concerning Target 2 implementation

Statements derived from the National Report	**NGO rating**
Considering ecosystem degradation and restoration needs in Czechia, the **national objective for ecosystem restoration is sufficiently ambitious.**	Disagree
Czechia's restoration approach sufficiently addresses the **long-term recovery and stability of ecosystems**.	Disagree
Current restoration policy in Czechia sufficiently addresses the need to improve **ecological connectivity** between ecosystems.	Disagree
Preparation of Czechia's **National Restoration Plan** is sufficiently advanced to support restoration implementation.	Disagree
Areas requiring ecosystem restoration are sufficiently **identified and prioritized** in Czechia.	Disagree
Restoration measures inside and outside protected areas are being implemented at a **sufficient scale** to address Czechia's ecosystem-restoration needs.	Strongly Disagree
Measures to restore **naturally flowing river conditions** are being implemented at a meaningful scale in Czechia.	Disagree
Restoration following **invasive alien species** control sufficiently supports ecosystem recovery in Czechia.	Disagree
The current **lack of area-under-restoration data** significantly limits the ability to assess restoration progress in Czechia.	Strongly Agree

NGO reactions to selected quotations from the 7NR

Quote from the 7NR

"Ecosystems are restored in accordance with the objectives of European and national legislation and with regard to the benefit of current and future generations and the ecosystems themselves."

NGO comment

"When this claim is so vague, without any details, without any milestones, timeline, you definitely can't say that it is ambitious enough."

Quote from the 7NR

"The long-term stability and restoration of all ecosystems is ensured through their sustainable management and use, taking into account the diverse contributions of nature, including the ecosystem services they provide to people."

NGO comment

"There are no concrete measures or specific targets or ways how to finance nature conservation, nature restoration [on the long run]."

C) Cross-check with IPBES Assessments

IPBES Nexus Assessment

Cross-sectorality

The National Report refers to instruments from nature conservation, spatial planning, water management, agriculture, forestry and public-land management. Cross-sectorality is therefore visible, but mainly as a juxtaposition of sectoral contributions. The NBSAP adds overarching objectives concerning resilience, ecosystem services and sustainable use. From the perspective of the Nexus Assessment, the thematic breadth is partly evident; however, a shared theory of change across sectors remains insufficiently documented.

Silos

The National Report provides no robust evidence of binding joint spatial prioritisation, compatible outcome indicators or a cross-ministerial mechanism for allocating resources. This points to persistent institutional and data-related silos. The NBSAP presents coordination as an objective but does not yet demonstrate that these silos have been overcome in practice. NGO criticism concerning connectivity, the state of planning and scale reinforces this finding.

Synergies

The National Report indicates potential synergies among river restoration, ecological connectivity, protected-area management and spatial planning. However, because spatial and impact data are lacking, these multiple benefits are not systematically quantified or

prioritised. The NBSAP adds references to ecosystem services and resilience. A Nexus-consistent approach would select measures according to their simultaneous benefits for biodiversity, water, climate resilience and societal well-being; the report does not yet provide a consistent method for doing so.

Trade-offs

The National Report does not present a systematic analysis of trade-offs between restoration and intensive land use, infrastructure, water management or other demands on land. Precisely because the National Restoration Plan has yet to determine the relevant areas, it remains unclear how such conflicts will be resolved and distributional effects taken into account. The NBSAP broadens the policy context but does not replace documented decision-making criteria. From a Nexus perspective, the treatment of trade-offs therefore remains weak.

Integrated governance

The National Report identifies institutional starting points through ministries, information systems and preparation of the National Restoration Plan. However, integrated governance would be systematically demonstrated only if shared spatial priorities, responsibilities, financing, monitoring and conflict resolution were connected. The NBSAP adds participation and coordination approaches, while NGO feedback highlights their limited implementation to date. Integrated governance is therefore only partly evident.

IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

Perspectives

The National Report describes restoration as contributing to ecosystem stability, benefits for present and future generations, and compliance with legal obligations. This partly reflects a shift in perspective beyond a narrow focus on protected areas. The NBSAP adds resilience, ecosystem services and connectivity. This shift would become transformative only if restoration were treated as a guiding principle for sectoral decisions; the National Report does not yet provide sufficient implementation evidence of this.

Structures

The National Report points to new or developing structures: the National Restoration Plan, information systems, indicators and ministry-specific instruments. Their effectiveness is limited, however, by missing spatial data, incomplete prioritisation and unclear long-term financing. The NBSAP adds strategic governance and participation elements. From a Transformative Change perspective, structural starting points exist, but they are not yet sufficiently binding and integrated to demonstrably alter established decision-making and financing logics.

Practices

The National Report describes individual measures and new indicators, but does not demonstrate a transition from project-based or sectoral implementation to comprehensive, long-term and outcome-oriented restoration practice. The NBSAP adds fields of action without closing the results gap. Transformative practice would require continuous management, adaptive governance, large-scale connectivity and changes to harmful land- and water-use practices. These elements have not yet been systematically demonstrated as established practice.

D) Overall assessment

Czechia's Seventh National Report presents existing strategic objectives and several institutional building blocks for Target 2, while also revealing that key spatial and progress data are missing and the NRP is still under preparation. NGO feedback confirms precisely this evidence gap. The NGO assessment is critical almost throughout and particularly confirms shortcomings in quantification, spatial prioritisation, scale, financing and data. Eight of the nine statements receive negative ratings; only the statement that missing spatial data substantially limit progress assessment receives "Strongly Agree". This does not dispute the existence of objectives, indicators and measures. Rather, it disputes that ambition, spatial prioritisation, implementation scale and long-term safeguards are already sufficient. Consideration of the NBSAP adds to the government's target architecture but does not alter the fact that the outcome evidence reported in the NR remains weak. NGO feedback thus validates the diagnosis of an early, not yet operationalised stage of implementation and contradicts a positive interpretation based merely on the existence of programmes or indicators. In comparison with IPBES, elements of the Nexus and Transformative Change approaches are partly present, but neither silos and trade-offs nor structures and practices have been systematically transformed. The central next step is therefore a binding, spatially prioritised and sustainably financed National Restoration Plan with consistent outcome monitoring.

Sources

- Czechia: Seventh National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (scbd-ort-nr7-cz-292576-1.pdf).
- Czechia: National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (CZ_NBSAP.pdf).
- IPBES Nexus Assessment; IPBES Transformative Change Assessment.
- NGO Questionnaire Czech Republic.

4.2. Finland

A) Government statements on the implementation of KMGBF Target 2

Finland's Seventh National Report (7NR) provides a comparatively detailed account of ecosystem-restoration policy and implementation. It names HELMI, SOTKA, AHTI, NOUSU and METSO as key instruments and officially assesses progress as "Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate" (7NR, PDF p. 11). The report therefore combines substantial programme evidence with an explicit acknowledgement that the current pace is not sufficient.The complementary national biodiversity documents provide strategic and historical context, but the 7NR remains the primary source. Across the evidence base, programme activities and areas under restoration are documented more clearly than a complete national baseline of degraded ecosystems, additionality, permanence and long-term ecological outcomes. The report also recognises contradictory developments, including continued drainage of peatlands for forestry, agriculture and land development.

Source: National Report: PDF p.12

Key findings on the level of ambition

Finland is preparing a national restoration plan under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation and reports a wide portfolio of restoration programmes. This demonstrates substantial policy ambition across mires, wetlands, forests, freshwater ecosystems and traditional rural biotopes. However, the completed national restoration plan, ecosystem-specific national priorities and a fully costed implementation pathway are not yet provided in the 7NR.

The report is unusually transparent about the gap between ambition and delivery. Annual mire restoration has ranged from approximately 1,000 to 5,000 hectares over the last 20 years, while research cited in the 7NR indicates that an approximately tenfold increase would be required to produce a noticeable increase in mire-species populations. The level of ambition is therefore programmatically strong but not yet commensurate with the scale of degradation. The official assessment—"Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate"—correctly distinguishes active implementation from adequate progress. Analytically, ecological integrity is addressed through habitat- and species-oriented programmes, but the national baseline, additionality of individual interventions, long-term permanence and the net balance between restoration gains and continuing degradation are not yet presented as one integrated results chain.

Source: National Report, PDF pp. 10–12

Key findings on implementation progress

The 7NR documents implementation through HELMI, SOTKA, AHTI, NOUSU and METSO. These programmes address mire and wetland restoration, traditional rural biotopes, special

forest habitats, waterbird habitats, migratory barriers, spawning grounds and forest biodiversity.

These named programmes provide credible evidence of activity and outputs. Finland also reports progress under indicator 2.1, “Area under restoration” (7NR, PDF p. 11). However, restored hectares, managed sites and removed barriers are output measures; they do not by themselves demonstrate additional, permanent ecological recovery at national scale. The 7NR itself states that restoration scale remains insufficient and that continued degradation can offset gains (7NR, PDF p. 12).

Source: National Report, PDF pp. 10–12 and Target 2 indicator information; complemented by Finland’s NBSAP.

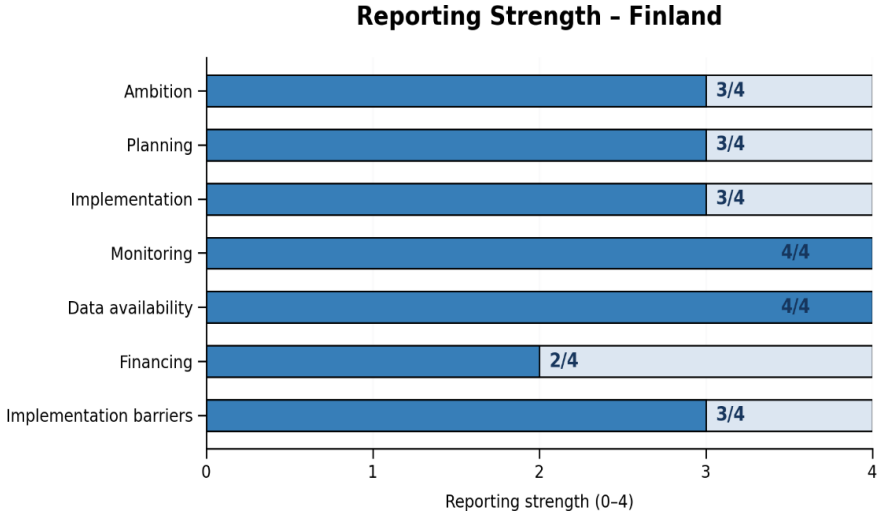
Key findings on monitoring and data

Finland reports progress through indicator 2.1, “Area under restoration”, and provides programme-specific quantitative information. This gives the country a comparatively strong implementation-data base and allows restoration activity to be tracked more clearly than in many national reports (7NR, PDF p. 11).
Nevertheless, area under restoration is not equivalent to ecological effectiveness. A complete chain from degraded baseline through intervention and additionality to ecological integrity, species recovery and permanence is not consistently presented. The reporting system is therefore strong for outputs and implementation tracking, but less complete for national net outcomes.

Source: National Report, PDF pp. 10–12 and Target 2 indicator information; complemented by Finland’s NBSAP.

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The 7NR explicitly identifies insufficient resourcing and insufficient scale as central barriers. It also reports contradictory developments, including peatland drainage for forestry, agriculture and land development. These pressures indicate a structural coherence problem: restoration programmes operate while other sectoral decisions continue to generate degradation. The NOUSU programme requires at least 50% private financing for dam-removal projects (7NR, PDF p. 11). The 7NR also describes an emerging nature-credit market intended to clarify how additional, permanent and verifiable nature values can be produced and traded. These are financing and governance instruments, not proof



that sufficient finance or verified outcomes have already been secured. Public resourcing, safeguards and reform of degradation-driving incentives remain essential.

Source: National Report, PDF pp. 10–12 and Target 2 indicator information; complemented by Finland's NBSAP.

Key findings on participation

The 7NR describes programme governance and preparation of the national restoration plan, but the reviewed Target 2 section does not document whether NGOs participated in drafting the National Report or how civil-society input affected priorities and implementation decisions. No inference is therefore made from general stakeholder cooperation.

Source: National Report, PDF pp. 10–12

B) NGO statements on the report and implementation status

The evidence base consists of the completed NGO questionnaire for Finland and the interview with BirdLife Finland, conducted on 9 October 2026.

Summary of NGO feedback

The NGO profile recognises Finland's programme architecture and monitoring capacity, while consistently criticising insufficient scale, resourcing and cross-sector policy coherence. The 15 documented responses comprise five Strongly Agree, two Agree, seven Disagree and one Don't Know.

Key findings on the level of ambition

BirdLife Finland strongly agrees that the current rate of restoration is insufficient and disagrees that the current national restoration-plan process already provides a sufficiently strong basis for implementation. The central concern is the gap between well-established programmes and the scale required for ecological recovery.

Key findings on implementation progress

HELMI, SOTKA, NOUSU and METSO are recognised as useful or effective programmes. The NGO nevertheless considers the current scale insufficient and reports delays, permitting constraints, funding shortages and continuing pressures such as peatland drainage and forestry. These are NGO findings and are kept separate from the government evidence in Chapter 1.

Key findings on monitoring and data

The NGO gives its most positive ratings to Finland's quantitative implementation reporting and ecological monitoring. It agrees that Finland has sufficient information to assess quantitative progress and that research organisations and universities contribute to monitoring ecological outcomes.

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

Insufficient restoration resources and weak policy coherence across forestry, agriculture and land development are the main concerns. The NGO also disagrees that the emerging nature-credit safeguards already guarantee additional, permanent and verifiable biodiversity gains.

Key findings on participation

The interview documents regular cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment and the Finnish IUCN committee. It does not contain a direct answer to the specific question of whether BirdLife Finland participated in drafting the National Report.

NGO ratings of individual statements concerning Target 2 implementation

Statements taken from the National Report	**NGO rating**
Finland's current rate of ecosystem restoration is insufficient to meet KMGBF Target 2.	Strongly Agree
The preparation process currently underway provides a sufficiently strong basis for an effective national restoration plan.	Disagree
Restoration programmes in Finland currently operate at an insufficient scale to reverse ecosystem degradation.	Strongly Agree
The Helmi Habitats Programme is delivering restoration at a scale sufficient to halt habitat decline.	Disagree
Finland's current rate of mire restoration is insufficient to achieve meaningful biodiversity recovery.	Strongly Agree
Current policy has not yet produced a net improvement in the ecological condition of Finnish peatlands.	Strongly Agree
The Sotka measures are sufficient to restore waterbird habitats and associated catchments at the required scale.	Disagree
NOUSU is delivering sufficient improvement in river connectivity and migratory-fish habitats.	Disagree
The requirement for at least 50% private funding allows ecologically important dam-removal projects to proceed.	Don't Know
The measures implemented through METSO are sufficient to establish a favourable trend in forest biodiversity.	Disagree
Biodiversity objectives are not yet sufficiently mainstreamed across forestry, agriculture and land-development decisions to support restoration gains.	Strongly Agree
Current resources for restoration are insufficient to reach the scale required.	Strongly Agree
The safeguards described for Finland's emerging nature-credit framework are sufficient to ensure that financed restoration gains are additional, permanent and verifiable.	Disagree
The reported area-under-restoration data are sufficient to assess Finland's quantitative implementation progress towards Target 2.	Agree
Finland's monitoring adequately demonstrates that reported restoration measures produce lasting ecological improvements.	Agree

NGO reactions to selected quotations from the 7NR

Quote from the 7NR

"The Helmi habitats programme (2021–2030) ... aims to tackle ... the decline of the area and quality of habitats."

NGO comment

"I think the scale is not sufficient enough. It has been a very, very, very effective programme, but there is some delay in them."

Quote from the 7NR

"METSO programme aims to halt the ongoing decline ... and to ensure that a favourable trend in forest biodiversity is established by 2025."

NGO comment

"METSO has been a very, very good and efficient programme, but it suffers from severe lack of funding."

Quote from the 7NR

"Contradictory developments continue ... work on mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors must be continued and stepped up."

NGO comment

"This is still a big issue in Finland, so there is lack of coherence between the policies."

C) Cross-check with IPBES Assessments

IPBES Nexus Assessment – cross-sector integration

The 7NR links restoration with climate mitigation and adaptation, water regulation, fisheries, forestry, agriculture and land development. HELMI, SOTKA, AHTI and NOUSU create important biodiversity–water–climate synergies, particularly through mire, wetland, catchment and river restoration. Yet the report also documents continuing peatland drainage and insufficient mainstreaming, showing that major sectoral silos remain.

Silos

The clearest silo concerns the disconnect between restoration policy and land-use decisions in forestry, agriculture and development. Programme-based restoration cannot produce a net national improvement if degradation continues elsewhere at a comparable or larger scale.

Synergies

Mire and wetland restoration can simultaneously support species recovery, carbon storage, water retention and climate resilience. River connectivity and catchment measures can

benefit biodiversity, fisheries and water quality. The 7NR documents these opportunities more clearly than their combined outcomes.

Trade-offs

Continuing peatland drainage, forestry pressures, agricultural use and development compete with restoration objectives. The report recognises these contradictions but does not provide integrated spatial priorities, common outcome indicators or a national net-balance framework.

Integrated governance

Finland has strong programmes and knowledge institutions. Nexus-consistent implementation now requires the national restoration plan to align spatial priorities, sector budgets, safeguards and outcome indicators across environment, forestry, agriculture, water and regional planning.

IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

Perspectives

Restoration is increasingly recognised as a national policy priority, and the 7NR is transparent about inadequate progress. However, the underlying production and land-use priorities that drive degradation are not yet fundamentally transformed.

Structures

HELMI, SOTKA, AHTI, NOUSU, METSO, strong research institutions and the national restoration-plan process are important structural assets. Their transformative effect is constrained by insufficient resources, incomplete mainstreaming and continuing contradictory policies.

Practices

Practical restoration occurs across multiple ecosystems and is quantitatively tracked. Yet the reported scale remains insufficient, and continued drainage and intensive land use prevent a demonstrated national net recovery. Transformative change would require scaling successful practices while ending or reforming practices that generate degradation.

D) Overall assessment

Finland is one of the stronger Target 2 reporters in terms of named programmes, quantitative implementation information and transparency about inadequate progress. Its main weakness is not the absence of activity, but insufficient scale and the continuing disconnect between restoration programmes and degradation-driving land-use decisions. Outputs are comparatively well documented; national additionality, permanence and net ecological recovery are less fully demonstrated. The NGO assessment confirms this mixed

picture, recognising strong monitoring and effective programme design while highlighting underfunding, delays and weak policy coherence.

Sources

- Finland: Seventh National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity especially PDF pp. 10–12.
- Finland's NBSAP
- NGO Questionnaire_Finland
- IPBES Nexus Assessment; IPBES Transformative Change Assessment.

4.3. Germany

A) Government statements on the implementation of KMGBF Target 2

Germany's Seventh National Report (7NR) presents preparation of the first National Restoration Plan as the central implementation step for ecosystem restoration. It reports that coordination and advisory structures are in place, participation is underway, data have been collected and a first draft is being prepared. Germany assesses progress as "On track to achieve target"

The evidentiary strength is highest for planning, governance and process. The Target 2 section provides much less consolidated evidence on the national area already under effective restoration, ecological outcomes, additionality, permanence or net ecosystem recovery. The NBS 2030 and its First Action Plan complement the policy context but do not replace the 7NR as the primary source.

Key findings on the level of ambition

Germany plans to draw up a draft National Restoration Plan by September 2026 under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. The plan is intended to combine measures from all sixteen Länder and the federal government in a "16+1" format, and it is linked to new restoration measures in action areas 7–12.

This represents a broad and institutionally ambitious planning process. However, the 7NR's "on track" assessment is based primarily on preparation, coordination, participation and data collection rather than on demonstrated national restoration outcomes.

Ambition is therefore strong at the level of institutional preparation, while the substantive adequacy of ecosystem-specific targets, spatial priorities, financing and delivery pathways can only be judged once the plan and its measures are fully specified.

Ecological integrity, additionality and permanence are not yet presented through a complete baseline-to-outcome chain. The report also does not provide a consolidated national net balance between restoration gains and ongoing degradation.

Source: National Report, PDF pp. 21–22; complemented by Germany's NBSAP.

Key findings on implementation progress

The 7NR states that implementation of various measures will begin during preparation of the National Restoration Plan and cites the Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity as an ongoing contribution.

These references establish that implementation activity exists, but the Target 2 section does not quantify the national area completed, the additional ecological benefit achieved or the permanence of outcomes. Planning progress and programme activity must therefore not be equated with verified national ecological progress.

Source: National Report, PDF pp. 21–22; complemented by Germany's NBSAP.

Key findings on monitoring and data

The 7NR reports that necessary data and information were collected through an online portal and that the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation is developing the first draft of the plan (7NR, PDF p. 21). "Area under restoration" is identified as the relevant headline indicator, but the Target 2 narrative does not report a consolidated national value.

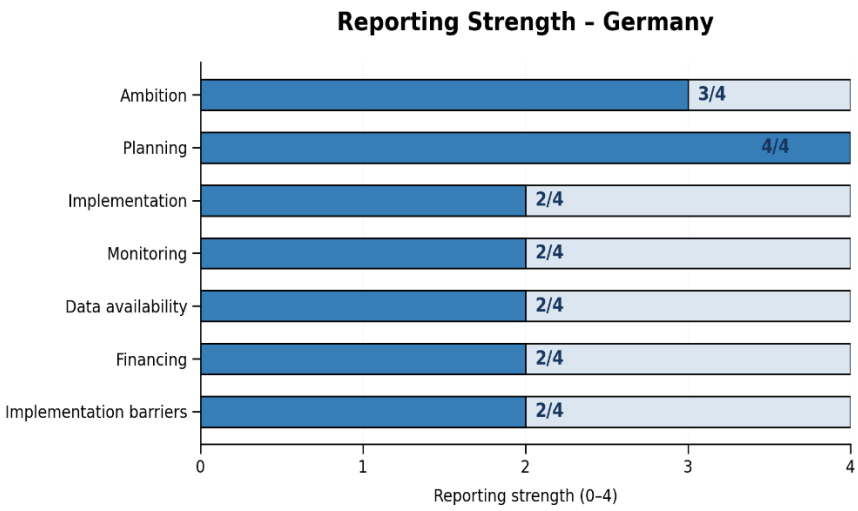
Germany therefore demonstrates an important planning-data infrastructure, but the published Target 2 evidence remains incomplete for tracking baseline degradation, intervention area, additionality, ecological integrity and long-term maintenance in one coherent national results framework.

Source: National Report, PDF pp. 21–22; complemented by Germany's NBSAP.

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The 7NR identifies federal coordination and joint decision-making as time-consuming, while EU timelines are tight. It also states that restoration can require considerable financial resources and that adequate funding from European, federal and Länder levels is necessary, supplemented by private investment and innovative finance.

Competition for land is a material analytical risk for large-scale restoration in Germany, but it is not explicitly assessed as a separate barrier in the Target 2 section of the 7NR. Restoration will need to be coordinated with agriculture, forestry, settlement, transport infrastructure and renewable-energy expansion. The 7NR calls



for close coordination and the use of synergies, but it does not document a spatial conflict-resolution mechanism or demonstrate how restoration priorities will be safeguarded where land-use objectives compete.

Source: National Report, PDF pp. 21–22; complemented by Germany's NBSAP.

Key findings on participation

The 7NR reports that a wide range of stakeholders is invited to participate and that participation processes are underway at federal and Länder level to enable early input (7NR, PDF p. 21). This is evidence of an established participation process, but the report does not show how stakeholder input changes priorities, budgets or measures.

Source: National Report, PDF pp. 21–22; complemented by Germany's NBSAP.

B) NGO statements on the report and implementation status

The evidence base consists of the completed NGO questionnaire for Germany and the interview with NABU, conducted on 07. October 2026.

Summary of NGO feedback

The NGO distinguishes sharply between a comparatively strong preparation process and insufficient results. It positively assesses preparatory structures, federal–state coordination, stakeholder participation, the federal action plan and the available planning data, but rejects the conclusion that Germany is already on track on the basis of ecological outcomes. The 15 documented ratings comprise two Strongly Agree, five Agree, five Disagree and three Strongly Disagree. No response was reconstructed or recoded.

Key findings on the level of ambition

The NGO considers the preparation process broadly adequate but judges the timetable insufficient and stresses that a good process does not by itself guarantee an adequate result.

Key findings on implementation progress

The NGO strongly disagrees that Germany is on track on the basis of restoration measures and ecological outcomes, and strongly disagrees that measures already underway are sufficient. At the same time, it strongly agrees that the Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions delivers valuable activity.

Key findings on monitoring and data

The NGO agrees that available data can support planning, but disagrees that the information reported under Target 2 is sufficient to quantify current national restoration progress.

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The NGO strongly rejects the adequacy of the financing approach despite highlighting the so called “Arbeitsprogramm Natürlicher Klimaschutz” as a positive example and considers voluntary measures alone insufficient. It also disagrees that restoration priorities are adequately safeguarded during renewable-energy expansion.

Key findings on participation

The NGO agrees that the participation process provides meaningful and early influence and strongly agrees that intergovernmental coordination arrangements are adequate. Its overarching judgement is that the process is strong while the result remains inadequate.

NGO ratings of individual statements concerning Target 2 implementation

Statements taken from the National Report	NGO rating
The preparatory process currently underway provides a sufficiently strong basis for developing an effective National Restoration Plan.	Agree
The timetable for preparing the National Restoration Plan is adequate for timely implementation of Germany’s obligations under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation.	Disagree
The “16+1” governance model is likely to deliver a coherent National Restoration Plan across Germany.	Agree
The participation process gives affected stakeholders meaningful and sufficiently early influence over the content of the plan.	Agree
The current coordination arrangements between the federal government, Länder, and municipalities are adequate to support implementation of the National Restoration Plan.	Strongly Agree
Based on restoration measures and ecological outcomes, Germany is on track to achieve KMGBF Target 2.	Strongly Disagree
Restoration measures already being implemented are sufficient to maintain progress towards the target while the National Restoration Plan is being prepared.	Strongly Disagree
Measures under the Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions are delivering verifiable ecosystem-restoration outcomes in Germany.	Strongly Agree
The available data are sufficient to support restoration planning and prioritisation in Germany.	Agree
The information reported for Target 3.1 is sufficient to quantify Germany’s current restoration progress.	Disagree
The financing approach described in the National Report is adequate to meet Germany’s restoration financing needs.	Strongly Disagree
Federal coordination requirements and tight regulatory timelines pose a significant risk to timely implementation of restoration in Germany.	Disagree
Voluntary measures and incentives are sufficient to secure restoration outcomes at the required scale.	Disagree
Germany’s planning framework adequately safeguards restoration priorities during renewable-energy expansion.	Disagree
Germany has provided sufficient information to demonstrate that meaningful restoration implementation is already underway.	Agree

NGO reactions to selected quotations from the 7NR

Quote from the 7NR
"During that process, the implementation of various measures will already begin." (PDF p. 21)

NGO comment
"I agree. They do great things; it is just not enough."

C) Cross-check with IPBES Assessments

IPBES Nexus Assessment – cross-sector integration

Germany's planning framework recognises links between biodiversity, climate, water, land use and renewable energy. The Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions is designed to create biodiversity–climate synergies. Yet explicit mechanisms for handling competition for land and cumulative trade-offs are not demonstrated in the Target 2 section.

Silos

The federal "16+1" architecture can pool measures, but it also creates risks of uneven ambition and fragmented delivery. Agriculture, forestry, infrastructure, settlement and energy planning can remain institutionally separate from restoration.

Synergies

Nature-based solutions can support ecosystem condition, climate mitigation, resilience and water regulation. Early coordination of restoration and renewable-energy planning could reduce conflicts if ecological safeguards are binding.

Trade-offs

Competition for land is the central trade-off. The report describes coordination needs but does not provide a spatial prioritisation mechanism or evidence that restoration will prevail where objectives conflict.

Integrated governance

The National Restoration Plan offers an opportunity to connect federal, Länder and municipal action. Nexus-consistent delivery requires shared baselines, spatial priorities, financing, safeguards and common ecological-outcome indicators.

IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

Perspectives

The policy framework increasingly treats restoration as a cross-government priority, but the "on track" narrative remains process-centred and does not yet demonstrate a shift in the drivers of degradation.

Structures

Coordination bodies, participation processes, the “16+1” model and the Federal Action Plan are important structural assets. Their transformative effect depends on adequate finance, binding implementation and mechanisms to resolve land-use conflicts.

Practices

Implementation measures are reported to be starting, but national-scale additionality, permanence and ecological recovery are not yet demonstrated. Transformative change requires scaling restoration while changing practices and incentives that continue to degrade ecosystems.

D) Overall assessment

Germany has a comparatively strong preparatory and governance process for Target 2, but the government’s “on track” assessment is not yet matched by consolidated national evidence of restoration area or ecological outcomes. The NGO assessment reinforces this distinction: the process is assessed positively, while implementation scale, financing and outcome evidence remain inadequate.

Sources

- Germany: Seventh National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, especially PDF pp. 20–22.
- Germany’s NBSAP
- NGO Questionnaire Germany
- IPBES Nexus Assessment; IPBES Transformative Change Assessment.

4.4. Italy

A) Government statements on the implementation of KMGBF Target 2

Italy's Seventh National Report explicitly anchors restoration in national targets B.2 and B.11. B.2 aims to prevent the deterioration of all ecosystems and to restore large areas of degraded ecosystems; B.11 addresses the restoration of the natural functions of inland waters and the good status of all waters by 2027. The report thus documents a broad direction of travel, but itself assesses progress for B.2 as "No significant change".

The National Biodiversity Strategy 2030 (NBSAP) supplements the 7NR with the strategic target and governance architecture. However, it does not change the central finding: targets and institutional preparation are better documented than additional restored areas, lasting ecological effects and nationwide scaling. The National Report and NBSAP therefore allow a robust analysis of ambition, but only a limited assessment of Target 2 impacts.

Key findings on the level of ambition

With target B.2, Italy formulates the ambition to prevent the deterioration of all ecosystems and to restore large areas of degraded ecosystems. Areas with high potential for carbon storage and disaster prevention are to be treated as priorities. Biodiversity, climate and risk-prevention objectives are thus linked.

For inland waters, target B.11 requires the restoration of natural functions and good status for all waters by 2027. The 7NR assesses progress here as existing, but not fast enough. Without a significant strengthening of measures, achievement of the target appears difficult.

The level of ambition is strategically relevant, but only partly defined operationally. "Large surfaces" is quantified neither in hectares nor as a national share of area; interim targets and a verifiable pathway to 2030 are absent. Nor is an Italian contribution to the EU target for free-flowing rivers specified.

Analytically, this means: ecological integrity is addressed through references to good status and natural functions. However, the baseline, additionality, permanence and spatial prioritisation are not operationalised in a way that would allow progress to be measured consistently. The official classification of "No significant change" for B.2 confirms this gap between the target and demonstrated change.

Source: National Report, PDF pp. 12–17; complemented by the NBSAP

Key findings on implementation progress

The 7NR names concrete activities and programmes, including river restoration, wetland and watercourse measures, marine restoration, MER, ReNature Italy and the renaturation of

the Po. These examples demonstrate activity, but they are not a national balance of restored ecosystems and do not provide evidence of nationwide ecological impact.

The 2024 land balance is particularly informative: 83.7 km^2 were newly converted into artificial surfaces, while slightly more than 5 km^2 were returned from consumed to unconsumed land. This results in net land take of 78.5 km^2 – the highest value in twelve years. A national land-take/recovery balance therefore exists, but there is no complete Target 2 outcome record across all ecosystem types. At the same time, the balance shows that continuing land take clearly exceeds the documented recovery.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 15–17; supplemented by the NBSAP

Key findings on monitoring & data

For inland waters, the 7NR contains concrete status data: 43.60% of surface water bodies achieve good or better ecological status; 70% of groundwater bodies achieve good or better chemical status. Italy also has data from Natura 2000, the Habitats Directive, water monitoring and national expert institutions. Status monitoring is therefore not generally weak.

At the same time, the report identifies gaps regarding hydraulic function, sediment transport, and longitudinal and lateral connectivity. For B.2, the assessment relies heavily on land take and recovered area. This does not replace integrated restoration monitoring that connects the baseline, measure, additional contribution, ecological integrity and permanence. The data situation is therefore stronger than the documented restoration impact chain.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 15–17; supplemented by the NBSAP

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

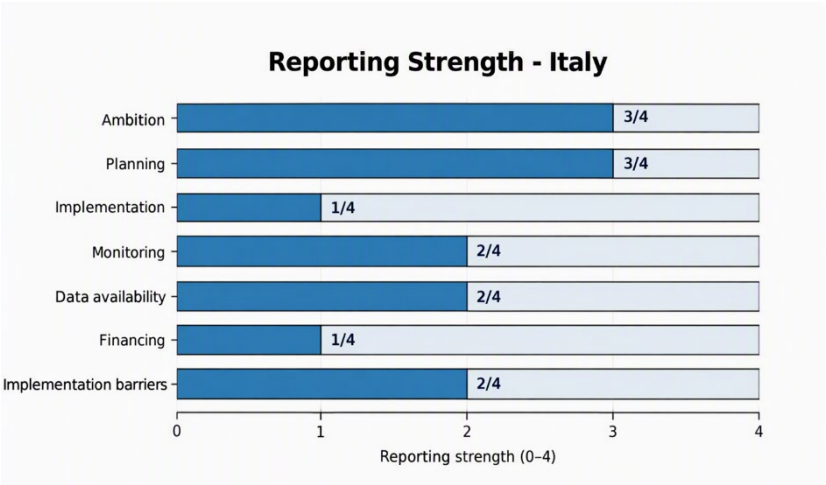
The 7NR describes several barriers: diffuse and point-source pollution, water abstraction, morphological changes, climate change, complex authorisation procedures and the need for cross-sectoral and multi-level coordination. Competition for land is an additional factor. Net land take of 78.5 km^2 in 2024 shows that restoration is taking place alongside continuing land consumption. Trade-offs with agriculture, infrastructure, settlement and coastal development are apparent, but are not systematically resolved through prioritisation rules.

On financing, the report notes that multiannual funding would facilitate timely implementation. This indicates a need for reliable financing, but does not in itself demonstrate a fully quantified national financing gap. A consolidated restoration budget and a clear allocation of long-term funding are not reported.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 15–17; supplemented by the NBSAP

Key findings on participation

For the National Restoration Plan, the 7NR reports a memorandum between the environment and agriculture ministries, a coordination platform and thematic working groups. This primarily demonstrates interministerial and technical-administrative coordination. By contrast, the report does not make clear which NGOs were involved in preparing the National Report, how comments were taken into account, or how civil-society participation beyond general consultations is ensured.



Source: National Report: PDF pp. 15–17; supplemented by the NBSAP

B) NGO statements on the report and implementation status

The evidence base consists of the completed NGO questionnaire for Italy and the interview with LIPU, BirdLife's partner in Italy, conducted on 28 September 2026.

Key findings on the level of ambition

The NGO recognises relevant national targets, but criticises their lack of quantification and unclear implementation pathways. It particularly criticises the vague wording "large surfaces", the absence of national area targets and the lack of a specified Italian contribution to the EU target for free-flowing rivers.

Key findings on implementation progress

The NGO identifies individual projects and regional approaches, but considers their scale insufficient. River restoration, marine restoration, landscape connectivity and the relationship to continuing land take are assessed particularly critically.

Key findings on monitoring & data

The NGO recognises extensive status information, but does not consider it to be used in a sufficiently integrated manner for prioritisation and restoration-outcome monitoring. Its assessment thus corresponds to the distinction between a comparatively sound technical data base and an incomplete impact chain.

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The NGO identifies a lack of specificity, slow development of governance, limited national funding and unclear EU earmarking as key barriers. Scaling in particular is assessed as insufficient.

Key findings on participation

According to its own statement, the NGO was not involved in preparing the National Report. LIPU stated only that it had offered the relevant actors its willingness to cooperate with the Ministry of the Environment. No actual involvement was reported.

NGO ratings of individual statements concerning Target 2 implementation

Statements derived from the National Report	NGO rating
The national objective of restoring large areas of degraded ecosystems is sufficiently ambitious.	No documented response
Degraded ecosystems requiring restoration are sufficiently identified and prioritized in Italy.	Strongly Disagree
The freshwater-restoration objective is sufficiently ambitious.	Disagree
Measures to restore free-flowing river conditions are implemented at a meaningful scale.	Strongly Disagree
Restoration measures are implemented at a scale sufficient to address national needs.	Strongly Disagree
River renaturalisation makes a meaningful contribution to national restoration needs.	Strongly Disagree
Regional wetland and water-course programmes make a meaningful contribution.	Disagree
Marine restoration is implemented at a meaningful national scale.	Strongly Disagree
Restoration initiatives are sufficiently interconnected at landscape scale.	Strongly Disagree
Current restoration is sufficient to counterbalance continuing land take.	Strongly Disagree
Current freshwater progress is sufficient to achieve good status by 2027.	Disagree
Monitoring systems provide sufficient information on implementation and outcomes.	Partially agree (original response)
Available data allow high-priority degraded ecosystems to be identified.	Disagree
Coordination among relevant national authorities is sufficiently developed.	Agree
Freshwater-restoration funding is sufficiently secure on a multi-annual basis.	Disagree

NGO reactions to selected quotations from the 7NR

Quote from the 7NR

"B.2 Ensure the non-deterioration of all ecosystems and ensure that large surfaces of degraded ecosystems are restored…"

> **NGO comment**
>
> *"I don't think it's clear enough and there is no strategy whatsoever to say how they will reach these goals. But even the definition of the targets is very vague."*

Quote from the 7NR

"Restore freshwater ecosystems and the natural functions of water bodies and achieve good status for all waters by 2027."

> **NGO comment**
>
> *"It is true that water quality in Italy, freshwater quality, has improved in many instances. But once again, in my opinion, the plan doesn't explain how this further improvement is going to be achieved."*

Quote from the 7NR

The report refers to restoring free-flowing river conditions in line with the EU restoration framework.

> **NGO comment**
>
> *"The target is 25,000 kilometers at the EU level. The Italian plan doesn't specify at all what is their target at the national level."*

Quote from the 7NR

The report describes restoration activities for terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

> **NGO comment**
>
> *"For certain habitats, we are talking about a few hundred hectares restored at the national level, which is basically nothing."*

C) Cross-check with IPBES Assessments

IPBES Nexus Assessment

The 7NR links restoration with water quality, climate adaptation, carbon storage, disaster prevention, agriculture and marine ecosystems. This breadth is consistent with a Nexus perspective. Operationally, however, common spatial priorities, cross-departmental outcome indicators and transparent allocation of funding are lacking.

Silos

The memorandum between the environment and agriculture ministries and the NRP platform represent progress in addressing institutional silos. However, the 7NR does not yet demonstrate that agriculture, water, spatial planning, infrastructure and nature conservation are governed through common targets, budgets and conflict-resolution procedures.

Synergies

Synergies are particularly apparent in river and wetland restoration, carbon storage, flood and drought prevention, and marine resilience. However, their multiple benefits are not consistently quantified or prioritised.

Trade-offs

Net land take of 78.5 km^2 in 2024 makes the trade-off between restoration and continuing land consumption visible. Further trade-offs involving agriculture, water abstraction, infrastructure and coastal development are not systematically assessed.

Integrated governance

Integrated governance is institutionally envisaged, but only partly implemented. A Nexus-consistent approach would require binding common spatial priorities, coordinated financing, compatible indicators and transparent conflict-resolution procedures.

IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

Perspectives

The target architecture recognises ecosystem functions, resilience, climate action and risk prevention. A more far-reaching transformation of societal relationships with nature, consumption and production patterns, or the power relations underlying degradation is scarcely documented.

Structures

The memorandum, coordination platform and working groups alter governance structures. Their transformative effect remains constrained by the absence of quantitative target pathways, unconsolidated financing and incomplete results-based management.

Practices

Projects and regional programmes demonstrate practical change, but not a nationwide transition to permanently secured, additional and outcome-oriented restoration. High net land take shows that key drivers of degradation have not yet been overcome.

D) Overall assessment

Italy has a relevant strategic target architecture, concrete programmes and cross-departmental governance that is currently being developed. The 7NR is strong on targets, status data for waters and institutional processes, but weak in demonstrating additional restored area, lasting ecological impact, overall financing and national scaling. The official classification of “No significant change” for B.2 and the 2024 net land-take balance confirm that institutional progress has not yet translated into a sufficient ecological trend reversal. The NGO assessments support this diagnosis, but acknowledge the developed coordination and parts of the database.

Sources

- Italy: Seventh National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity
- Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Sicurezza Energetica: Strategia Nazionale per la Biodiversità al 2030, The Italian Biodiversity Strategy and its Governance by 2030
- NGO Questionnaire Italy
- IPBES Nexus Assessment; IPBES Transformative Change Assessment.

4.5. The Netherlands

A) Government statements on the implementation of KMGBF Target 2

The Netherlands' Seventh National Report (7NR) presents implementation of Target 2 mainly through preparation of the National Restoration Plan required under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. It records the current level of progress as "Unknown". The report describes coordination with provinces, water authorities, municipalities and other parties; work to identify ecosystems requiring restoration and the measures needed; expansion of monitoring; and preparation of legal, administrative and financial conditions. It does not report a consolidated national area under restoration or nationally verified ecological outcomes against Target 2.

The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2025–2030 provides complementary policy context across protected areas, nitrogen-sensitive Natura 2000 sites, forests, soils, marine and freshwater systems, large waters, infrastructure and agricultural landscapes. It also states that the National Restoration Plan, to be drawn up before 1 September 2027, will provide more concrete restoration planning. The 7NR therefore remains the primary source for the formal progress assessment, while the NBSAP supplements it with policy, programme and financing information.

Key findings on the level of ambition

The policy framework combines KMGBF Target 2 with the binding requirements of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. The NBSAP explicitly presents Target 2 as "Restore 30% of all Degraded Ecosystems", while its national-goals material also refers to the EU objective of restoring at least 20% of land and sea by 2030 and all ecosystems requiring restoration by 2050. The Dutch contribution is to be specified further through the National Restoration Plan rather than through an already adopted, quantified national 30% pathway.

Ambition is broad in ecosystem coverage and the NBSAP recognises pressures including water depletion, habitat fragmentation and excessive nitrogen deposition. However, the reviewed documents do not yet provide a complete national degraded-ecosystem baseline, ecosystem-specific restoration quantities, final spatial priorities or a complete costed pathway to 2030.

Source 7NR, PDF pp. 4–6

Key findings on implementation status

The NBSAP documents a substantial portfolio of existing instruments, including the Nature Programme, nature conservation analyses, the Forest Strategy, the Programmatic Approach to Great Waters, marine and freshwater policy instruments and measures in and around nitrogen-sensitive Natura 2000 sites. It reports €2.8 billion for the Nature Programme over 2021–2030, a further planned €500 million from 2026 for measures to prevent deterioration in and around Natura 2000 sites, and about €415 million per year previously available under the Nature Pact.

These instruments demonstrate restoration-related activity and finance, but they do not constitute a consolidated Target 2 results account. The documents do not aggregate the national area under effective restoration or demonstrate nationally verified ecological outcomes. The formal 7NR status of "Unknown" therefore remains consistent with an implementation picture in which programmes and measures exist, but national target-level progress cannot yet be established from the reported evidence.

Source 7NR, PDF pp. 4–6

Key findings on monitoring & data

The Netherlands has substantial biodiversity-monitoring infrastructure under the Birds and Habitats Directives and through national monitoring systems. The NBSAP describes monitoring and reporting arrangements and measures to improve information on target achievement and restoration effects.

The 7NR nevertheless states that monitoring requirements under the Nature Restoration Regulation do not always align with existing national systems. Monitoring is being expanded, while the headline Target 2 result of national area under restoration is not yet reported. Monitoring capacity is therefore a strength, but Target 2-specific aggregation and outcome attribution remain incomplete

Source 7NR, PDF pp. 4–6

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The official documents identify limited space, competing societal demands, coordination, monitoring data, funding and administrative conditions as implementation challenges. The NBSAP frames biodiversity policy within wider demands from agriculture, housing, energy, mobility, defence, water management and nature and promotes more integrated approaches to land use.

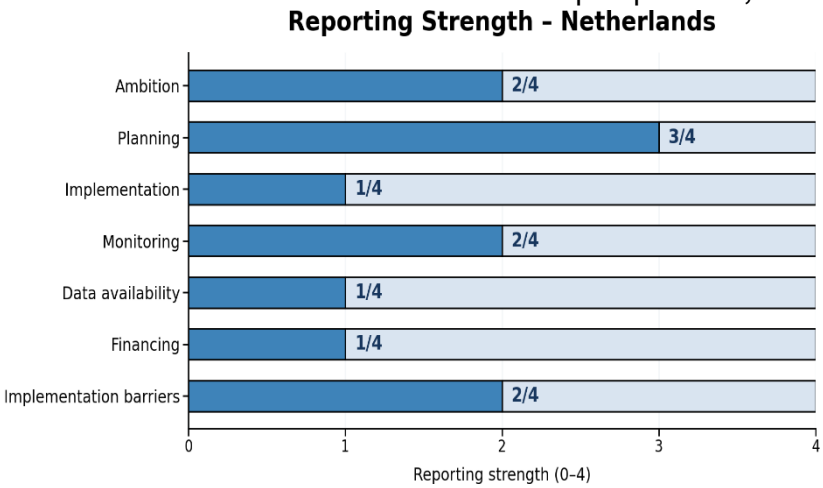
Financing is distributed across multiple programmes rather than presented as a complete Target 2 envelope. The NBSAP states that a National Biodiversity Finance Plan will assess funding needs and available resources, and it also states that no additional public funds are envisaged beyond the resources described in its finance chapter. A consolidated

restoration-cost estimate and secured long-term Target 2 financing pathway are not documented.

Source 7NR, PDF pp. 4–6

Key findings on participation

The documents report broad intergovernmental coordination and stakeholder participation. The NBSAP states that more than 100 stakeholders were involved in its preparation. This demonstrates consultation and inclusion of non-state perspectives, but the reviewed Target 2 evidence does not establish how stakeholder input changes spatial priorities, budgets or final restoration decisions. Participation is therefore documented more clearly as a process than as decision-making influence.



Source 7NR, PDF pp. 4–6

B) NGO statements on the report and implementation status

The evidence base consists of the completed NGO questionnaire for the netherlands and the interview with eurosite, conducted on 28 September 2026.

Summary of NGO feedback

The NGO considers the formal restoration objective ambitious but finds the implementation pathway substantially weaker. Existing commitments are compiled without sufficiently assessing effectiveness or specifying additional measures, financing and end goals. Monitoring is strongest in Natura 2000 areas but remains uneven elsewhere, while funding for monitoring is distinct from inadequate implementation finance. Limited space is primarily a matter of political land-allocation choices, especially intensive agriculture; multifunctional approaches could combine biodiversity, water, farming and climate objectives. Overall, a substantial gap persists between formal commitments and measurable delivery, while structural drivers of degradation remain insufficiently addressed.

Key findings on the level of ambition

The formal restoration objective is regarded as ambitious, but the interviewees distinguish it from the national policies intended to achieve it. They describe the headline target as stronger than the implementation pathway currently visible in national planning and

characterise the emerging approach as minimum compliance rather than an ambitious national translation of the EU framework.

Key findings on implementation status

Implementation is identified as the principal weakness. Existing policy commitments are sometimes presented as if their delivery were assured, although known gaps remain. The interview refers to the earlier objective of adding 80,000 hectares of nature by the end of 2027 and states that about 45,000 hectares still had to be delivered. Positive regional initiatives are acknowledged, but the interviewees do not regard them as evidence that restoration is progressing sufficiently at national scale.

Key findings on monitoring & data

Dutch monitoring capacity is recognised, particularly for Natura 2000 and legally binding habitat requirements. Coverage is nevertheless described as weaker outside protected areas and incomplete for marine and freshwater ecosystems. The experts confirm that national and EU monitoring systems do not always align and that restoration data require substantial further attention.

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The experts strongly reject the statement that the necessary budget has been allocated. They distinguish resources for monitoring and permitting-related evidence from long-term finance for restoration measures. Intensive agriculture, nitrogen pressures, fragmented governance and the treatment of policy promises as results are identified as structural barriers

Key findings on participation

The interview provides stakeholder perspectives on planning and implementation; however, evidence on formal NGO influence over preparation of the 7NR is documented only in the Annex.

NGO assessments of individual statements in the context of Target 2 implementation

Statements derived from the National Report	**NGO rating**
The national restoration target is linked to the goal of restoring at least 20% of land area and 20% of sea area by 2030, and all ecosystems requiring restoration by 2050.	Agree
The key ecosystems requiring restoration have been sufficiently identified in the Netherlands	Strongly Disagree
The necessary restoration measures are already sufficiently identified.	Strongly Disagree
Additional restoration actions are still needed beyond those already covered by existing policies.	Strongly Disagree
Overall progress towards ecosystem restoration is sufficient.	Strongly Disagree

Cooperation through the joint programme with provinces, water authorities, municipalities and other parties is taking place effectively.	Disagree
Adequate restoration-monitoring structures exist or are being established.	Agree
National restoration monitoring is expanding.	Agree
The necessary budget has been allocated.	Agree
Monitoring requirements under the Nature Restoration Regulation do not always align with existing national systems.	Agree
Monitoring data requires additional attention for restoration implementation.	Strongly Agree
Funding requires additional attention for restoration implementation.	Strongly Agree
Administrative coordination requires additional attention for restoration implementation.	Agree
Limited space in the Netherlands is a major challenge for restoration implementation.	Disagree

NGO responses to selected quotations from the 7th NR

Quote from the 7NR

"We are developing a joint program with provinces, water authorities, municipalities, and other parties…"

NGO comment

"On individual basis, on regional basis, there are a lot of positive developments."

Quote from the 7NR

"A major challenge for the implementation of this national target is the limited space in the Netherlands."

NGO comment

"The problem is not limited space. The problem is the choices we make and how to use it."

Quote from the 7NR

"This plan will map out which ecosystems need to be restored…"

NGO comment

"They say we can't take most measures because we lack knowledge."

C) Comparison with IPBES assessments

IPBES Nexus Assessment

Cross-sectorality

The Dutch policy framework links restoration to water management, agriculture, climate adaptation, forestry, marine policy, infrastructure and spatial planning. This thematic breadth is consistent with a Nexus perspective. Operational integration is less clearly demonstrated: the reviewed documents do not provide a single delivery framework

combining shared spatial priorities, common ecological-outcome indicators, coordinated finance and accountability across these sectors.

Silos

Restoration-related responsibilities and instruments remain distributed across nature conservation, agriculture, water management, spatial planning, infrastructure and marine policy. The NBSAP documents activity in these fields, but does not demonstrate that they operate through shared restoration priorities, compatible outcome indicators or a jointly financed implementation framework. The stronger monitoring architecture associated with protected habitats than with a complete national Target 2 results chain also illustrates evidentiary fragmentation. The NGO evidence further identifies differences between formal commitments, regional delivery and sectoral land-use decisions.

Synergies

The NBSAP identifies potential synergies among biodiversity restoration, water retention and quality, climate adaptation and mitigation, forest and peatland management, sustainable agriculture and resilient landscapes. Nature-based solutions and multifunctional land use can therefore support several objectives simultaneously. The documents do not yet demonstrate that such combined benefits systematically determine national restoration priorities or are monitored through a common outcome framework.

Trade-offs

Trade-offs are explicitly relevant where restoration interacts with agriculture, housing, energy, mobility, defence, water management and other demands on land and sea. The documents recognise these pressures but do not provide a transparent national method for resolving competing claims, assessing distributional effects or demonstrating how ecological restoration objectives are safeguarded where sectoral interests conflict.

Integrated governance

Cooperation among national government, provinces, water authorities, municipalities and other actors, together with preparation of the National Restoration Plan, provides an important institutional basis for integrated governance. Nexus-consistent delivery will depend on whether this architecture produces common baselines, binding spatial priorities, coordinated finance, clear responsibilities, conflict-resolution mechanisms and comparable ecological-outcome indicators

IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

Perspectives

The NBSAP recognises that biodiversity recovery is connected to pressures such as nitrogen deposition, water depletion and fragmentation and links biodiversity with water,

climate, food and wider societal resilience. This represents a system-oriented perspective. At the same time, the policy framework remains strongly based on adapting and coordinating existing programmes, and the reviewed evidence does not demonstrate that restoration has become a governing principle across all degradation-driving sectors.

Structures

The future National Restoration Plan, EU restoration obligations, Natura 2000 and national ecological-network governance, multi-level administration, programme financing and monitoring institutions are important structural assets. Their transformative effect is not yet established because responsibilities and finance remain distributed across programmes and the documents do not provide a consolidated national degraded-ecosystem baseline or outcome-accountability framework.

Practices

Practical restoration-related activity is documented across habitats and programmes. However, the evidence remains stronger for programmes, measures and administrative preparation than for additional, permanent ecological recovery at national scale. Transformative practice would require scaling effective restoration while also changing the land- and resource-use practices and incentives that continue to cause ecosystem degradation. The reviewed evidence does not yet demonstrate this transition nationally.

D) Overall assessment

The Netherlands has a broad and institutionally developed restoration-policy framework. The NBSAP documents programmes across terrestrial, freshwater, marine, agricultural, forest and urban ecosystems, while the country also has substantial monitoring capacity, multi-level governance arrangements and relevant financing programmes. The forthcoming National Restoration Plan offers an opportunity to consolidate these elements into a coherent national implementation framework.

The available evidence nevertheless supports an assessment of advanced preparation rather than demonstrated national delivery of KMGBF Target 2. The Seventh National Report records progress as “Unknown” and does not provide a consolidated degraded-ecosystem baseline, an aggregate national area under effective restoration or verified national ecological outcomes. The NGO assessment reinforces this distinction between formal ambition and actual delivery and identifies insufficient implementation finance, incomplete specification of restoration measures and continuing land-use pressures as central weaknesses. From an IPBES perspective, the Dutch framework contains important Nexus and Transformative Change entry points, but cross-sectoral breadth has not yet been converted into shared spatial priorities, common outcome indicators or demonstrated change in the underlying drivers of degradation. The decisive next step is therefore a

National Restoration Plan that connects quantified restoration needs with spatial priorities, secured financing, clear responsibilities and long-term ecological-outcome monitoring.

Sources

- Seventh National Report of the Netherlands to the Convention on Biological Diversity
- Netherlands NBSAP
- NGO Questionnaire Netherlands
- IPBES Nexus Assessment and IPBES Transformative Change Assessment (analytical frameworks).

4.6. Poland

A) Government statements on the implementation of KMGBF Target 2

Summary observations on the evidentiary value of the 7NR and NBSAP

Poland's Seventh National Report describes a broad portfolio of restoration-related measures and the preparation of the country's first National Plan for the Restoration of Natural Resources (KPOZP). It presents restoration as extending across peatlands, wetlands, river valleys, coastal habitats, forests, grasslands and habitats affected by invasive alien species. The report is therefore informative about the intended policy direction, the range of instruments already in use and the principal implementation constraints. Its evidentiary value for determining progress towards Target 2 is nevertheless limited: Poland states that it does not currently have the data required to calculate the headline indicator on area under restoration, and the report does not provide a national baseline, a quantified degraded-area denominator or an aggregate area under effective restoration.

The uploaded NBSAP is the Programme of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity together with the Action Plan for 2015–2020, adopted in 2015. It predates the KMGBF and cannot be treated as Poland's post-2022 Target 2 strategy. It provides supplementary historical context on ecological connectivity, sectoral pressures, restoration measures, monitoring responsibilities and financing arrangements. It does not close the National Report's current evidence gaps on scale, ecological outcomes or progress against the 30 per cent target.

Key findings on the level of ambition

The NR situates restoration within European and national commitments

The National Report links Poland's restoration agenda to the EU Nature Restoration Law and reports that the first KPOZP is being prepared to cover all ecosystem types through 2050. This signals a potentially comprehensive, long-term approach rather than a collection of isolated projects. The report also characterises prospects for target achievement as likely or on track and refers to numerous existing restoration measures. However, the ambition is not yet operationalised in a form that permits independent assessment against KMGBF Target 2. The Target 2 section contains no adopted national restoration baseline, no quantified

estimate of the total degraded area, no national hectare target corresponding to 30 per cent by 2030, and no ecosystem-specific interim milestones. The plan intended to organise this architecture is still under preparation. Consequently, the report documents strategic intent and alignment with EU requirements, but not yet a complete, measurable national Target 2 pathway.

The 2015–2020 NBSAP broadens the historical policy context through objectives on ecosystem resilience, ecological connectivity, habitat conservation and restoration across agriculture, forestry and water management. Because it predates both the KMGBF and the EU Nature Restoration Law, these objectives should be read as foundations for the current agenda, not as evidence that Poland has adopted or quantified the present Target 2 ambition.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 117–120; NBSAP: PDF pp. 12, 17–22, 33–48.

Key findings on implementation status

The NR documents a broad portfolio of measures, but not aggregate progress towards 30 per cent

The National Report identifies measures already under way in peatlands, wetlands and river valleys, including restoration of water relations, retention measures, wastewater infrastructure and action on agricultural runoff. It also reports interventions concerning coastal habitats, forests, grasslands, invasive alien species and species or habitat projects supported through LIFE and national or local instruments. Selected outputs and geographic examples are provided, including river-valley water regimes and local wetland and meadow projects. This demonstrates activity across several ecosystem types and governance levels. Yet the report does not aggregate project areas, distinguish consistently between planned, ongoing and completed restoration, or show whether interventions meet a common definition of effective restoration. Nor does it demonstrate resulting improvements in ecosystem condition, function, integrity or connectivity at national scale.

The central implementation gap is therefore one of scaling and results attribution. A portfolio of measures is not equivalent to demonstrated progress towards 30 per cent where the national degraded-area baseline and restored-area numerator are unavailable. The NBSAP confirms that restoration-related measures were embedded in earlier sectoral action planning, but its 2015–2020 time horizon means that it cannot establish current implementation speed, durability or contribution to the 2030 target. The analysis therefore distinguishes documented activities from verified ecological outcomes and target-level progress.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 117–120; NBSAP: PDF pp. 17–24, 33–48.

Key findings on monitoring & data

Monitoring components exist, but the headline area-under-restoration indicator is not yet available

The National Report refers to research, inventories and monitoring undertaken by environmental and water authorities and indicates that restoration effects are monitored in parts of the existing programme landscape. These elements provide building blocks for a future reporting system. The decisive limitation is stated explicitly: Poland currently lacks the data needed to calculate the headline indicator for areas under restoration, and the indicator is still being developed. The report further identifies the need for a centralised system that links ecosystem status and restoration effects to indicators corresponding to the 30 per cent target.

This is more than an isolated data gap. Without a consistent degraded-area baseline, spatially referenced project data, a uniform threshold for what counts as effective restoration, and repeated measurements of ecological condition, Poland cannot robustly aggregate activity or assess its contribution to Target 2. The earlier NBSAP already assigned monitoring and evaluation functions and included programme-level indicators, but these arrangements did not produce the current headline value reported as missing in the National Report. The available evidence therefore supports a cautious conclusion: institutional monitoring components exist, but an integrated Target 2 measurement chain from baseline to verified ecological outcome is not yet demonstrated.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 118–120; NBSAP: PDF pp. 17–31, 43, 51–53.

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The NR identifies mutually reinforcing financial, institutional and land-use barriers

The National Report identifies multiple funding sources, including LIFE, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the Cohesion Fund, national programmes and payment mechanisms for landowners. This mix shows that restoration is not wholly unfunded. At the same time, the report identifies insufficient long-term financing and reliance on project-based funding as core constraints. It also records coordination gaps, unclear institutional responsibilities, conflicts concerning measures on private land, and the need for stronger incentives and technical support for landowners. Ecological and land-use pressures—including drought, floods, urbanisation and agricultural intensification—further complicate implementation.

These barriers are mutually reinforcing. Fragmented responsibilities and incomplete spatial prioritisation impede coherent investment planning; project-based finance can leave monitoring, maintenance and adaptive management unsupported after projects end; and

missing outcome data makes it difficult to direct resources to the most effective measures. Competition for land is visible through private-land conflicts, urbanisation pressure and agricultural intensification, but the report does not quantify how these pressures affect the area available for restoration or establish a binding conflict-resolution framework. The NBSAP provides historical information on funding instruments and sectoral implementation conditions, yet it does not supply a current, consolidated and multiannual Target 2 financing plan that compares needs, secured resources and the remaining gap.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 118–120; NBSAP: PDF pp. 5, 18–19, 25–26, 31–38, 41, 47, 49, 52, 56.

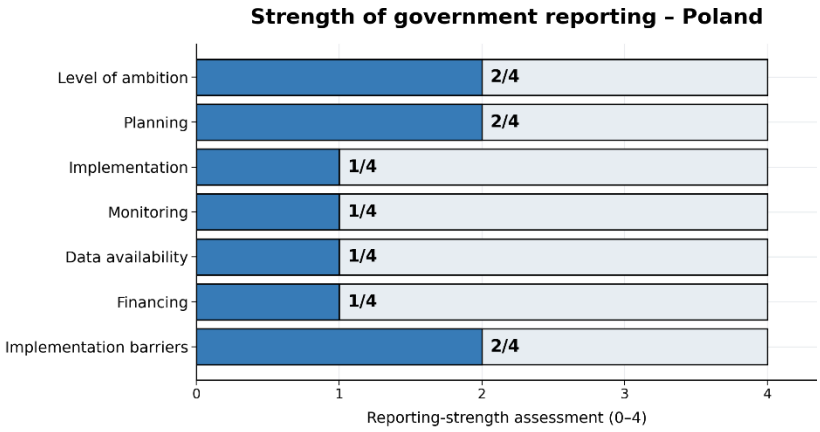
Key findings on participation

Participation is recognised as necessary, but a Target 2-specific mechanism is not demonstrated

The Target 2 section of the National Report identifies greater involvement of local communities and stronger social dialogue as necessary to secure acceptance of restoration measures. This is particularly relevant where measures affect private land or established agricultural and other land uses. However, the report provides little detail on a Target 2-specific participation architecture: it does not set out who participates in KPOZP priority-setting, how site selection and trade-offs are negotiated, how rights-holders and land users influence decisions, or how disagreements are resolved and feedback incorporated.

The NBSAP contains earlier references to public participation, education and stakeholder involvement, which demonstrate that participatory principles were already present in biodiversity policy. Because the document covers 2015–2020, it cannot establish the quality or influence of participation in the current Target 2 process. On the documentary evidence available, participation is recognised as a condition for implementation, but its continuity, representativeness and decision-making influence are not yet demonstrated.

Source: National Report: PDF p. 120; NBSAP: PDF pp. 18, 21, 26–27, 32, 53.



B) NGO statements on the report and implementation status

The evidence base consists of the completed NGO questionnaire for Poland and the interview with OTOP, BirdLife's partner in Poland, conducted on 01. October 2026.

Summary of NGO feedback

The NGO evidence combines the completed questionnaire with the interview. It accepts broad ecosystem coverage and appropriate prioritisation, but assesses implementation across peatlands, rivers, coasts, forests and grasslands as insufficient in scale and ecological effect. Monitoring and national area-under-restoration data remain inadequate, while financing, coordination, power relations and private-land barriers constrain delivery. Q1 was answered "Don't Know" because the national restoration plan had not been published; this response is documented but not scored.

This chapter presents the documented assessments of the interviewed NGO. Questionnaire selections are reproduced as marked in bold and yellow in the source document. The four-point scale is applied only to Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree. "Don't Know" is documented but is not converted into a numerical score. National Report evidence is kept separate from NGO interpretation.

Key findings on the level of ambition

The NGO distinguishes the breadth of Poland's emerging restoration framework from its substantive ambition. It agrees that restoration planning should cover all ecosystem types and that key ecosystems should be prioritised. However, it did not assign a scale score to the overall ambition because the national restoration plan had not yet been published and only partial information was available. In the interview, the NGO further described a recurring gap between technically informed drafts and political outcomes after intersectoral negotiation, indicating concern that ambition may be weakened before adoption.

Key findings on implementation status

The NGO's assessment of implementation is consistently critical across peatlands, rivers and valleys, coastal ecosystems, forests, meadows and grasslands, and recent reported outcomes. The responses do not deny that measures or projects exist. Rather, they reject the proposition that these activities amount to restoration at a nationally significant scale or with sufficiently meaningful ecological results. This distinction between activity and demonstrated contribution to Target 2 is central to the NGO assessment.

Key findings on monitoring & data

The NGO considers restoration monitoring inadequate and strongly confirms that the absence of the headline area-under-restoration indicator is a major obstacle to assessing progress. Its questionnaire annotation suggests that existing monitoring is too narrow in

scope, while the interview differentiates project-level or taxon-specific information from an integrated national system capable of tracking area, condition and restoration outcomes.

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The NGO strongly rejects the sufficiency of current restoration financing and strongly confirms that long-term funding, coordination and private-land barriers constrain implementation. The NGO's additional comment that coordination is also 'about power' broadens the diagnosis beyond administrative efficiency to the distribution of authority across sectors and institutions. Interview evidence also highlights sectoral conflict, especially where restoration competes with established land uses.

Key findings on participation

No questionnaire question addresses participation as a separate thematic block. In accordance with the template rule that thematic blocks are used only where corresponding questions exist, no participation assessment is constructed here. Evidence on whether and how the NGO was involved in preparing the National Report is reserved exclusively for the annex.

The interview transcript does not contain a direct, documented answer to whether or how the participating NGO was involved in preparing Poland's Seventh National Report. Accordingly, no involvement claim is made in the main chapters or in this annex. The transcript does document the NGO's willingness to review the draft of this independent country assessment (interview, 51:33–51:57), which is separate from preparation of the National Report.

NGO assessments of individual statements in the context of Target 2 implementation

Statements derived from the National Report / questionnaire	**NGO rating**
Considering ecosystem degradation and restoration needs in Poland, the current national restoration framework is sufficiently ambitious.	Don't Know
The current restoration approach in Poland sufficiently addresses restoration needs across different ecosystem types.	Agree
Prioritising peatlands, river valleys, wetlands and coastal ecosystems is appropriate for accelerating restoration progress in Poland.	Agree
Current peatland-restoration efforts are occurring at a scale that can significantly improve the condition of degraded peatland ecosystems.	Strongly Disagree
River and valley restoration is being implemented at a scale that makes a meaningful contribution to ecosystem restoration in Poland.	Strongly Disagree
Current coastal-restoration activities sufficiently address Poland's coastal restoration needs.	Disagree
Current forest-restoration measures sufficiently address restoration needs in Poland's forests.	Strongly Disagree
Grassland and meadow restoration is occurring at a scale that makes a meaningful contribution to restoration objectives in Poland.	Strongly Disagree
Recent restoration outcomes in river valleys, wetlands and wet meadows represent meaningful progress towards ecosystem restoration in Poland.	Strongly Disagree

Statements derived from the National Report / questionnaire	NGO rating
Current restoration monitoring is sufficiently developed to assess restoration implementation and ecological outcomes.	Disagree
The lack of data for the main restoration-area indicator significantly limits the ability to assess restoration progress.	Strongly Agree
The volume of restoration financing is sufficient to support restoration implementation in Poland.	Strongly Disagree
Insufficient long-term restoration funding significantly constrains restoration implementation in Poland.	Strongly Agree
Insufficient coordination is a significant barrier to achieving restoration objectives in Poland.	Strongly Agree
Conflicts of interest and implementation barriers on private land significantly constrain ecosystem restoration in Poland.	Strongly Agree

NGO responses to selected quotations from the 7th NR

Quote from the 7NR

"Measures aimed at the renaturalisation of peatlands are being carried out." (PDF p. 117)

NGO comment

"There are a lot of restoration projects in Poland, but they are just points, the dots on the map of the needs of peatlands which should be restored. [...] There are just some small interventions, which are of course good to have good effects, but it doesn't reverse the trend."

Quote from the 7NR

"Measures aiming at the increase of retention include the renaturalisation of rivers and valleys..." (PDF pp. 117–118)

NGO comment

"If there would be a point worse than strongly disagree, I would use it in this point. [...] They are doing everything they can to do the opposite."

Quote from the 7NR

"Continuous monitoring, scientific research and inventories of degraded areas are conducted, as well as monitoring of restoration effects..." (PDF p. 118)

NGO comment

"There is such a lack of data in Poland. [...] If you don't know where you are, how can you know where you want to go?"

Quote from the 7NR

"The actions undertaken so far require better coordination in order to achieve the 30% target within the set timeframe." (PDF p. 119)

NGO comment

"It's not only coordination, it's also a matter of power. [...] Because of the lack of power, they were losing all battles with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Infrastructure, and so on."

C) Comparison with IPBES assessments

IPBES Nexus Assessment

Cross-sectorality

The National Report identifies instruments from nature conservation, spatial planning, water management, agriculture, forestry and public land management. Cross-sectorality is therefore visible, but mainly as a juxtaposition of sectoral contributions. The report does not demonstrate a shared impact logic, jointly agreed restoration priorities or common outcome indicators across these sectors. The NBSAP adds historical objectives relating to resilience, ecosystem services and sustainable use, but predates the KMGBF. In Nexus terms, thematic breadth is partly evident, while operational cross-sector integration remains insufficiently documented.

Silos

The National Report provides no robust evidence of binding joint spatial prioritisation, compatible outcome indicators or a cross-ministerial procedure for allocating restoration finance. It explicitly identifies coordination gaps and unclear institutional responsibilities, while the headline area-under-restoration indicator is not yet calculable. These findings indicate that institutional, financial and data-related silos persist. The NBSAP formulates coordination as an objective, but does not show that such silos have been overcome. The NGO's strong agreement that coordination is a barrier—and its comment that the issue is also "about power"—reinforces this assessment.

Synergies

The National Report indicates potential synergies among river and wetland restoration, water retention, ecological connectivity, protected-area management, climate resilience and land management. These measures could simultaneously support biodiversity, water regulation and adaptation to droughts and floods. However, because spatial baselines, impact data and the headline restoration indicator are lacking, such multiple benefits are not systematically quantified or used to prioritise interventions. The NBSAP adds references to ecosystem services and resilience. A Nexus-consistent approach would select and monitor measures according to their combined benefits for biodiversity, water, climate resilience and societal well-being; a consistent national method for doing so is not yet demonstrated.

Trade-offs

The National Report identifies private-land conflicts, urbanisation pressure and agricultural intensification, but does not document a systematic analysis of trade-offs between restoration and intensive land use, infrastructure, water management or other demands on land. Because the National Restoration Plan is still under preparation, it remains unclear how affected areas will be selected, how distributional effects will be assessed and how conflicts will be resolved. The NGO assessment confirms that private-land barriers are significant and describes sectoral power conflicts. In Nexus terms, the recognition of pressures is stronger than the documented machinery for negotiating trade-offs.

Integrated governance

The National Report shows institutional entry points through ministries, environmental and water authorities, information systems and preparation of the National Restoration Plan. Integrated governance would, however, require shared spatial priorities, clearly allocated responsibilities, coordinated finance, compatible monitoring and a transparent conflict-resolution process. These links are not yet demonstrated as a functioning system. The NBSAP adds historical participation and coordination approaches, while NGO evidence points to limited practical influence and persistent power asymmetries. Integrated governance is therefore only partly evident.

IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

Perspectives

The National Report frames restoration as a contribution to ecosystem stability, legal compliance and benefits for present and future generations. This indicates a perspective broader than narrow, site-based protection. The NBSAP adds resilience, ecosystem services and connectivity. Yet the available evidence does not show that restoration has become a guiding principle for decisions in agriculture, forestry, water management, spatial planning and infrastructure. The NGO interview's account of technically ambitious content being diluted during intersectoral negotiation further limits evidence of a transformative change in perspective.

Structures

The National Report points to new or further-developed structures: the National Restoration Plan, information systems, indicators, ministry-specific instruments and several funding channels. Their potential is constrained by missing spatial and outcome data, incomplete prioritisation, unclear long-term finance and unresolved responsibilities. The NBSAP provides historical strategic-governance and participation elements, but does not establish a post-KMGBF structure. In Transformative Change terms, structural entry points exist, but

they are not yet sufficiently binding and integrated to demonstrably alter established decision-making, sectoral power relations and financing logics.

Practices

The National Report describes numerous restoration measures and the development of indicators, but does not demonstrate a transition from project-based or sectoral delivery to area-wide, long-term and outcome-oriented restoration practice. It neither aggregates restored area against the 30 per cent denominator nor verifies ecological outcomes nationally. The NBSAP adds fields of action without closing this outcome gap. Transformative practice would require continuous maintenance, adaptive management, landscape-scale connectivity and changes to harmful land- and water-use practices. NGO responses across peatlands, rivers, coasts, forests, grasslands and recent outcomes indicate that such a shift has not yet been experienced at meaningful national scale.

Poland's reported Target 2 approach contains important entry points for Nexus-oriented and transformative implementation: broad ecosystem coverage, links to water and climate resilience, preparation of a national restoration plan, multiple funding instruments and recognition of coordination and participation needs. The decisive weakness is not the absence of relevant themes, but the absence of demonstrated integration. Shared spatial priorities, common indicators, quantified synergies, transparent trade-off rules, long-term financing and outcome-based practice are not yet evidenced as a coherent national system. On the available documentation, Poland is therefore better characterised as being in a preparatory and institution-building phase than as demonstrating integrated or transformative restoration governance.

D) Overall assessment

Poland's Seventh National Report presents a broad and increasingly structured restoration agenda. It documents measures across peatlands, wetlands, river valleys, coastal habitats, forests, grasslands and invasive-species management, and reports that the first National Plan for the Restoration of Natural Resources (KPOZP) is being prepared in alignment with the EU Nature Restoration Law. These elements establish a credible policy direction and a potentially comprehensive institutional framework. However, the report does not yet provide the evidence needed to demonstrate progress towards restoring 30 per cent of degraded ecosystems by 2030. It contains no adopted national degraded-area baseline, no quantified national restoration-area target, no aggregate area under effective restoration and no national outcome assessment against common ecological criteria.

The central limitation is the missing measurement chain from planning to verified results. Poland explicitly reports that data are not yet available to calculate the headline indicator for area under restoration. Existing inventories, authority-level monitoring and project information therefore do not yet amount to an integrated national system capable of linking

site-level action to ecosystem condition, connectivity and Target 2 progress. This gap also limits the ability to compare ecosystem needs, prioritise investments and demonstrate whether reported activities are producing durable ecological outcomes.

The NGO evidence reinforces this distinction between the existence of measures and their national significance. The NGO agrees that the planning scope should cover all ecosystem types and that key ecosystems should be prioritised, but it does not score the overall ambition because the national plan was not yet available. Its assessments of implementation are predominantly negative: peatland, river, coastal, forest, grassland and recent outcome claims are judged insufficient in scale or ecological meaning. The NGO also considers monitoring inadequate, strongly confirms the significance of the data gap, rejects the sufficiency of current finance and identifies long-term funding, coordination, institutional power and private-land barriers as major constraints.

Financing and governance evidence is more developed than outcome evidence, but remains incomplete. The National Report identifies LIFE, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the Cohesion Fund, national programmes and landowner payment mechanisms. It also candidly records project-based funding, insufficient long-term finance, fragmented responsibilities, private-land conflicts, drought, floods, urbanisation pressure and agricultural intensification. The report therefore provides a comparatively transparent diagnosis of implementation barriers. What is not yet documented is a consolidated multiannual financing plan that relates ecological need to secured resources, closes the maintenance and monitoring gap, and resolves competition for land through transparent spatial priorities and conflict-resolution rules.

The IPBES comparison places Poland in a preparatory and institution-building phase. Potential Nexus synergies are visible between biodiversity restoration, water retention, river and wetland functioning, climate resilience and land management. Yet cross-sectorality is reported mainly as parallel sectoral activity rather than as shared spatial prioritisation, common indicators or joint accountability. Similarly, the KPOZP, monitoring development and multiple funding channels are important structural entry points for transformative change, but the available documents do not yet demonstrate a shift to landscape-scale, long-term, outcome-oriented practice or a redistribution of institutional incentives and power sufficient to overcome established sectoral silos.

Overall, Poland's Target 2 framework should be assessed as strategically promising but not yet measurably operational. The broad ecosystem scope, preparation of a national plan and explicit recognition of barriers are strengths. The decisive weaknesses are the absence of an adopted quantitative baseline and pathway, insufficient evidence of national-scale ecological outcomes, fragmented long-term financing, incomplete cross-sectoral governance, and limited documentation of meaningful participation and trade-off

management. Progress towards Target 2 cannot currently be independently verified from the reporting evidence.

Sources

- Poland: Seventh National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity
- Poland NBSAP-v3
- NGO Questionnaire Poland
- IPBES Nexus Assessment; IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

4.7. Portugal

A) Government statements on the implementation of KMGBF Target 2

Key findings on the level of ambition

Portugal's Seventh National Report (7NR) presents a national restoration ambition aligned with the 2030 objective of placing 30% of degraded ecosystems under effective restoration. The report links this ambition to implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation and preparation of the National Nature Restoration Plan (NNRP). The ambition is broad across terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, marine and urban ecosystems, but the report notes that the NNRP is still under preparation and does not yet provide a complete, nationally consolidated restoration baseline or a fully operational spatial target architecture. Portugal's NNRP was published on 2 October but was not analysed, as noted above.

The official assessment is "Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate". This distinction is important: the report demonstrates strategic readiness and preparatory activity, but does not yet demonstrate delivery at a pace commensurate with the 2030 objective.

Source: National Report: PDF p. 28

Key findings on implementation progress

The 7NR documents technical preparation, working arrangements and ecosystem-specific studies supporting the NNRP. These are implementation-enabling outputs rather than verified ecological outcomes. The report does not provide a nationally consolidated total for area under effective restoration, nor does it establish that protected-area coverage or project footprints are equivalent to restoration area. Additionality therefore cannot be demonstrated nationally: reported measures may be relevant, but the report does not consistently distinguish new post-KMGBF action from pre-existing programmes.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 24-28

Permanence and ecological integrity are not yet evidenced through national outcome series. The report describes restoration-oriented measures and technical criteria, but does

not provide a complete account of post-intervention condition, durability, or whether ecological function has been restored at national scale. Trade-offs and competition for land and sea space remain relevant implementation risks, particularly where restoration priorities interact with agriculture, forestry, infrastructure, water management and coastal uses; these are not systematically quantified in the Target 2 block.

Key findings on monitoring and data

Portugal reports preparatory baseline work, technical studies and monitoring requirements. This supports a rating above minimal reporting, but the 7NR does not yet provide an operational national Target 2 time series or a consolidated outcome dataset. Data availability is therefore partial rather than absent: contextual and preparatory evidence exists, while the data needed to answer the target comprehensively are still incomplete.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 25-28

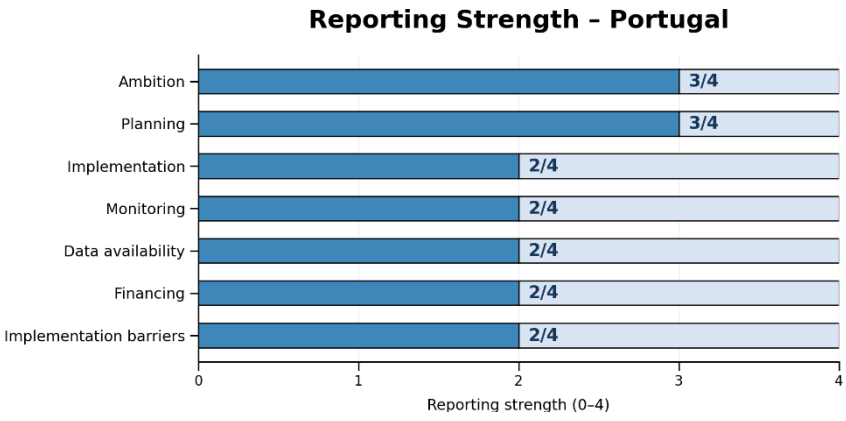
Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The report identifies public financing channels and institutions, including the Environmental Fund and other national and EU-linked instruments. Portugal's reporting is comparatively concrete in naming instruments, but it does not quantify a complete, long-term Target 2 financing pathway, the total funding need, or the residual financing gap to 2030. Financing is consequently assessed as partly documented, not fully secured.

Implementation barriers can be inferred from the need for baseline development, cross-sector coordination, technical capacity, monitoring architecture and stable finance. However, the 7NR does not present a systematic barrier register with magnitude, ownership, mitigation measures and deadlines. This limits accountability and makes it difficult to connect constraints to the official insufficient-rate assessment.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 24-28

Key findings on participation



The 7NR and complementary material describe working processes around preparation of the NNRP. Participation evidence from SPEA is treated separately in the annex and is not used as Government Evidence. The government reporting does not provide a complete assessment of representativeness,

influence on decisions, or how participation is balanced across mainland Portugal and the autonomous regions.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 24-28

B) NGO statements on the report and implementation status

The evidence base consists of the completed NGO questionnaire for Portugal and the interview with SPEA, BirdLife's partner in Portugal, conducted on 09. October 2026.

Summary of NGO feedback

The NGO assessment presents Portugal as a comparatively advanced case in terms of strategic preparation for ecosystem restoration. The respondents express strong confidence in the revised ENCNB 2030, the technical preparation of the National Nature Restoration Plan (NNRP), and coordination across mainland Portugal, the Azores and Madeira. At the same time, they consistently distinguish planning readiness from demonstrated restoration outcomes. Monitoring systems, financial transparency and ecosystem-specific implementation remain under development, and several ecosystem groups continue to face important information gaps.

The verified questionnaire contains three Strongly Agree responses, ten Agree responses, one Disagree response and one Don't Know response. Q5 is explicitly rated Agree, accompanied by the qualification that meaningful participation was stronger for NGOs and organised stakeholders than for affected local communities. Q8 remains Don't Know and therefore sits outside the four-point assessment scale.

Key findings on the level of ambition

The NGO gives a broadly positive assessment of Portugal's strategic and institutional readiness for ecosystem restoration. The revised ENCNB 2030 is rated as providing a strong strategic basis for restoration policy, while the multi-entity technical work supporting the National Nature Restoration Plan is assessed particularly positively. The NGO also considers the integration of ecosystem restoration into spatial planning and the overall coordination process across mainland Portugal, the Azores and Madeira to be sufficiently advanced.

The assessment nevertheless distinguishes preparedness from implementation. The interview documents that important knowledge gaps remain, particularly in marine ecosystems and in some habitats outside Natura 2000. The NGO therefore recognises substantial ambition and planning capacity while acknowledging that some elements of the evidence base still need further development before restoration priorities can be fully operationalised nationwide.

Key findings on implementation progress

The NGO assessment suggests that Portugal is increasingly translating restoration planning into practical implementation. The respondents point to ecosystem-specific programmes, funding mechanisms, technical reports and restoration-planning processes as evidence that restoration objectives are beginning to move beyond strategy and into action. Positive

assessments are recorded for national restoration delivery, river-connectivity planning, marine restoration readiness, urban restoration and pollinator-related measures.

However, implementation progress is not viewed as uniform across all sectors. Marine restoration planning is still affected by significant baseline-information gaps, and in several cases the current focus remains on generating the knowledge required for future restoration decisions. Likewise, the NGO notes that approved pollinator measures and monitoring arrangements are important achievements, but that many anticipated outcomes have yet to materialise.

The most cautious assessment concerns ProRios 2030. The NGO selected Don't Know because it could not determine whether the programme, as currently designed, will deliver meaningful river restoration at national scale. Interview participants highlighted uncertainty regarding the proportion of funding that supports ecological restoration compared with broader infrastructure or river-management interventions.

Key findings on monitoring and data

The NGO assessment differentiates between current monitoring capacity and anticipated future capacity. Interview participants emphasised that substantial work has already been undertaken to identify data gaps, define indicators and establish future monitoring approaches. They regard this preparatory work as a significant achievement and express confidence that Portugal will improve its monitoring framework over time.

At the same time, the interview documents several current limitations. The participants note incomplete baseline information for some indicators, geographical biases in certain monitoring datasets and remaining uncertainties regarding agricultural, soil and biodiversity indicators. The NGO therefore recognises considerable progress in monitoring preparation while acknowledging that a fully operational and comprehensive baseline system is not yet in place.

Despite these reservations, the respondents ultimately agree that the information currently available is broadly sufficient to assess Portugal's progress towards Target 2, provided that the reported evidence is interpreted alongside the acknowledged data limitations and ongoing monitoring-development efforts.

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

Financial transparency emerges as the most significant weakness identified by the NGO assessment. The respondents explicitly disagree with the statement that the financing information currently available is sufficient to determine how much public funding directly supports ecosystem restoration. This is the only negatively rated statement in the questionnaire.

While the NGO recognises that Portugal has identified potential funding sources and financing instruments, interview participants stress that current reporting does not establish a sufficiently direct connection between funding volumes, funding sources and specific restoration measures. As a result, it remains difficult to determine how much restoration-specific finance is available and how funding is distributed across restoration

objectives. The NGO therefore distinguishes between the existence of financing mechanisms and the transparency required to assess restoration financing comprehensively.

Key findings on participation

The NGO assessment gives a generally positive evaluation of participation processes while highlighting important limitations. The respondents agree that environmental NGOs and organised stakeholders had meaningful opportunities to engage throughout restoration-planning processes and public consultations. According to the interview, NGOs, researchers, public authorities and sectoral actors were actively involved in discussions surrounding restoration planning.

Nevertheless, both interview participants stressed that the situation differs for affected local communities. While consultation opportunities formally existed, they considered outreach and involvement at local level less developed than engagement with organised stakeholder groups. The planning process had not yet progressed sufficiently to allow many local communities to provide detailed feedback on restoration interventions likely to affect specific territories.

For this reason, the final documented answer is Agree rather than Strongly Agree. The NGO assessment therefore reflects a mixed picture: participation opportunities are broadly available, but meaningful influence remains uneven across stakeholder groups.

NGO ratings of individual statements concerning Target 2 implementation

Only the first template representation is used. Don’t Know and unmarked responses remain outside the scale.

Assessment statement	**NGO answer**
The revised ENCNB 2030 provides a sufficiently strong strategic basis for ecosystem restoration in Portugal.	Strongly Agree
Ecosystem restoration is adequately integrated into spatial planning and territorial-development decisions in Portugal.	Agree
The technical work currently underway provides a sufficiently strong basis for an effective National Nature Restoration Plan.	Strongly Agree
Portugal currently has sufficient evidence to identify and prioritise the ecosystems and areas most in need of restoration.	Agree
The participation processes gives environmental NGOs and affected communities meaningful influence over restoration policy and planning.	Agree
Restoration planning is sufficiently coordinated across mainland Portugal, the Azores and Madeira.	Strongly Agree
Portugal has provided sufficient evidence that restoration is moving from planning to implementation at the scale required by KMGBF Target 2.	Agree
The planned ProRios 2030 actions are sufficient to deliver meaningful river and stream restoration at national scale.	Don't Know
Portugal's current planning is sufficiently advanced to guide effective restoration of river connectivity and floodplain functions.	Agree
Portugal's current evidence and planning are sufficient to prioritise restoration measures across its marine ecosystems.	Agree
Portugal has sufficient baseline data and policies to prevent net loss of urban green space and tree canopy by 2030.	Agree

Portugal has sufficient measures and monitoring in place to reverse pollinator decline by 2030.	Agree
Portugal will have sufficient national baselines and monitoring capacity to assess restoration progress in agricultural and forest ecosystems.	Agree
The financing information in the National Report is sufficient to determine how much public funding directly supports ecosystem restoration.	Disagree
The information reported is sufficient to assess Portugal's actual progress towards KMGBF Target 2.	Agree

NGO reactions to selected quotations from the 7NR

Quote from the 7NR

"Environmental organisations, national agencies, representatives of land and sea use sectors, researchers, academia and private companies [...], local communities and citizens. All had the opportunity to engage on the public consultation [...]." (PDF p. 3)

NGO comment

"NGOs and public authorities were in fact involved and there was this public consultation. But local communities actually cannot yet provide clear feedback on what will happen on their territories because things are still not at the local scale level."

Quote from the 7NR

"This technical report characterises the baseline situation in mainland Portugal and the Autonomous Regions [...]." (PDF p. 9)

NGO comment

"They gathered all the experts also in the Azores and Madeira and their regional administration entities. For all the articles, the specific situations and needs of the autonomous regions were identified. I would strongly agree with that."

Quote from the 7NR

"For marine ecosystems [...] seven target habitat groups: seagrass beds; macroalgal forests; shellfish beds; maerl beds; sponge, coral and coralligenous beds; vents and seeps; soft sediments [...]." (PDF p. 8)

NGO comment

"There were many knowledge gaps identified, but all seven marine habitat groups were addressed. Where information was weak or non-existent, gathering that information became part of the restoration measures."

Quote from the 7NR

"In the last year Portugal has invested in several environmental projects [...] through the Portuguese Climate Agency (ApC) funds, EUR 486.8 million in total." (PDF p. 6)

NGO comment

"The potential funding sources were identified, but there was not a direct link between the amount of money and which groups of restoration measures would be supported. It was not detailed enough to determine how much funding directly supports restoration."

C) Cross-check with IPBES Assessments

IPBES Nexus Assessment – cross-sector integration

Portugal's approach shows nexus potential because restoration is linked to spatial planning, water, climate, land management, marine systems and urban policy. The principal weakness is operational integration: the 7NR does not yet demonstrate a common cross-sector baseline, quantified trade-off management, or a national outcome framework connecting biodiversity restoration to water, food, health and climate outcomes. The NNRP process is therefore an opportunity to convert coordination into measurable synergies and safeguards against displacement of pressures.

IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

The report indicates institutional preparation and a shift toward restoration as a central policy objective, but transformative change is not yet demonstrated. Structures are evolving through the NNRP and EU regulation; practices remain dominated by preparatory studies and programme-level action; and the report provides limited evidence of changes in incentives, finance allocation, land-use decisions or accountability sufficient to address underlying drivers. Participation and knowledge networks can support transformation, but their influence on decisions and implementation should be documented.

D) Overall assessment

Portugal combines relatively strong ambition and planning with incomplete evidence of implementation, monitoring outcomes and national-scale data. The official "insufficient rate" assessment is consistent with this pattern. The strongest features are the strategic integration of restoration, the technical preparation for the NNRP and identifiable financing institutions. The main weaknesses are the absence of a consolidated restoration baseline and time series, limited proof of additionality and permanence, incomplete financial traceability, and insufficiently systematic treatment of barriers and land-use trade-offs.

The priority is to translate the NNRP process into a spatially explicit and financed delivery framework with ecosystem-specific baselines, area and condition indicators, milestones, responsible authorities and public progress reporting. Until that architecture produces verified outcomes, preparatory outputs should not be interpreted as achievement of Target 2.

Sources

- Portugal Seventh National Report
- Portugal national biodiversity strategy
- NGO Questionnaire Portugal
- IPBES Nexus Assessment; IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

4.8. Spain

A) Government statements on the implementation of KMGBF Target 2

Summary observations on the evidentiary value of the 7NR and NBSAP

Spain's Seventh National Report (7NR) is the primary source for this assessment. The document does not present a self-contained national Target 2 implementation chapter. Instead, restoration-relevant measures are reported mainly under National Target 1 on PDF pp. 5–13. These passages are used as contextual government evidence only and are not relabelled as a separate Target 2 block. The formal KMGBF Target 2 reporting anchor is PDF p. 128, where Spain reports "No data available" for the headline indicator and points to the National Restoration Plan, still under preparation, as the future vehicle for producing the required information.

The complementary strategy document is used only to clarify policy architecture and planned direction; it does not replace the 7NR or cure gaps in formal reporting. No official progress category is reconstructed. Likewise, hydrological reserves, protected areas, designated sites and programme outputs are not aggregated into a national restoration total unless the government source explicitly identifies them as areas under effective restoration. This distinction is central to the assessment of additionality, permanence and ecological outcomes.

Key findings on the level of ambition

Spain reports a broad national objective to restore ecosystems in order to recover and conserve natural heritage and biodiversity, reinforce ecological connectivity, maintain landscape values and ecosystem services, and prioritise nature-based solutions. The Green Infrastructure, Connectivity and Ecological Restoration Strategy, its methodological update and the first Work Programme provide a recognisable strategic framework. The developing National Restoration Plan may further consolidate implementation under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation.

The level of ambition is nevertheless only partially evidenced. The reviewed reporting does not provide a verified national degraded-ecosystem baseline, a consolidated area to be restored, a time-bound national trajectory corresponding to the 2030 objective, or explicit tests showing that reported action is additional to routine conservation management. Nor does it specify how ecological integrity, long-term maintenance and permanence will be secured across ecosystem types. Spain therefore demonstrates strategic breadth and planning effort, but not yet a complete, measurable Target 2 delivery framework.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 5-13 and p.128

Key findings on implementation progress

The 7NR reports implementation activity through the national green-infrastructure strategy, its Work Programme, hydrological reserves and related river, lake, lagoon and aquifer protection measures. These measures are relevant because they can reduce pressures, improve connectivity and create enabling conditions for restoration. They also demonstrate that implementation is not starting from zero and that several administrative instruments are already operational.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 5-13 and p.128

Key findings on monitoring and data

Spain identifies a comparatively developed biodiversity-information architecture, including SIIB, IEPNB, biodiversity portals and thematic monitoring systems. These systems can support spatial prioritisation, condition assessment and future tracking. However, the formal Target 2 indicator field on PDF p. 128 states “No data available”. Consequently, the report does not yet provide a nationally consolidated chain from degraded baseline, through intervention and area under restoration, to ecological response and durable outcome. Existing monitoring capacity should therefore not be equated with verified Target 2 performance data.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 5-13 and p.128

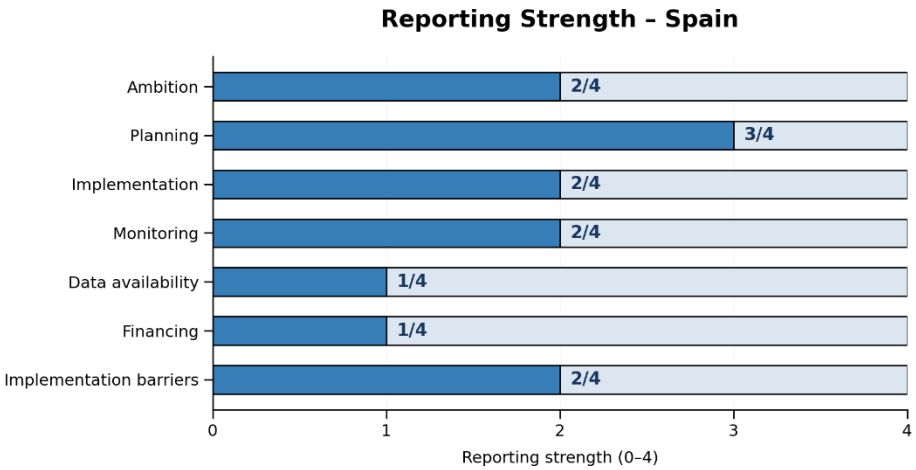
Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The main weakness is the gap between policy preparation and a fully financed, outcome-based delivery system. The reviewed government evidence does not establish a dedicated long-term financing pathway, quantified additionality criteria, permanence safeguards, or a national method for distinguishing restoration from protection and routine management. It also does not systematically report trade-offs, opportunity costs or distributional effects. Competition for land is analytically relevant—particularly where restoration interacts with agriculture, infrastructure, water use, forestry and renewable-energy deployment—but it is not presented in the cited passages as a documented government barrier and is therefore not attributed to the government.

Source: National Report: PDF pp. 5-13 and p.128

Key findings on participation

Government reporting refers to governance and planning instruments, but the reviewed passages do not demonstrate how civil society, land users, local authorities, scientific bodies or affected communities influenced priorities, implementation choices or monitoring design. Participation in wider restoration-policy processes cannot be treated as evidence of involvement in drafting the 7NR. To preserve source separation, NGO experience is assessed only in Chapter 2, while the specific drafting question remains confined to the annex.



Source: National Report, PDF pp. 5–13 and p. 128.

B) NGO statements on the report and implementation status

The evidence base consists of the completed NGO questionnaire for Spain and the interview with SEO, BirdLife's partner in Spain, conducted on 02. October 2026.

Summary of NGO feedback

The NGO evidence presents a consistent picture: Spain has important strategic instruments and an emerging restoration framework, but implementation is not yet sufficiently operational, transparent or measurable. The questionnaire records disagreement on ambition, threatened-habitat coverage, implementation and several enabling conditions; one item is marked "Don't Know", and positive ratings are limited to selected aspects. The interview adds more specific concerns about the translation of mapped or prioritised areas into concrete interventions, the lack of a detailed timetable and financial plan, additionality, and incomplete cross-ministerial governance. These points are NGO evidence and are not merged with government findings.

Key findings on the level of ambition

The NGO disagrees that the national restoration objective is sufficiently ambitious in light of ecosystem degradation and restoration needs. Its concern is not the absence of strategic language, but the lack of operational precision: the framework does not yet demonstrate how priorities become measurable restoration commitments across ecosystem types. The absence of a quantified national baseline and delivery trajectory also limits the ability to judge whether the ambition is commensurate with the scale of degradation.

Key findings on implementation progress

The NGO acknowledges that strategies, work programmes and restoration-related activity exist, yet does not regard the evidence as sufficient to demonstrate implementation at the scale required by Target 2. A central concern is whether identified areas will translate into concrete, ecologically effective interventions. The distinction between designation, protection, project activity and verified restoration outcome is therefore decisive; activity alone is not treated as proof of recovery.

Key findings on monitoring and data

The NGO assessment is consistent with the formal data limitation in the 7NR. Monitoring institutions and information systems exist, but the headline indicator lacks data and the current evidence does not permit a complete outcome-based assessment. Q3 was answered "Don't Know" and is not converted into a numerical score. This preserves the original response and avoids inferring either support or disagreement from uncertainty.

Key findings on implementation barriers and financing

The interview identifies three linked implementation risks: absence of a detailed timetable, absence of a specific financing plan, and incomplete cross-sector integration. It also raises additionality concerns, because expenditure or activity may not necessarily represent new restoration effort. Interministerial coordination is especially relevant where land-use decisions and agricultural incentives shape feasibility. However, the Ministry of Agriculture is absent from the Governance and Executive Accountability framework established in the 2nd Work Program of the Green Infrastructure & Ecological Restoration Strategy. These are direct NGO concerns and remain clearly separated from government evidence.

Key findings on participation

Spain submitted its National Restoration Plan (NRP) to the European Commission on 31 August 2026, following a participatory process lasting approximately 18 months and involving four dedicated workshops. The NGO notes that they have participated in the workshops as part of an organised, civil-society coalition. The draft will now undergo the Strategic Environmental Assessment process, which will include new phases of institutional consultation and public participation. The Plan will continue to be reviewed and updated until its final submission, scheduled for before September 1, 2027. During this second consultation phase, civil society organisations will advocate for concrete timelines, funding, indicators, and implementation and monitoring mechanisms, which are currently lacking.

NGO ratings of individual statements concerning Target 2 implementation

Statements taken from the National Report	NGO rating
Considering ecosystem degradation and restoration needs in Spain, the national ecosystem-restoration objective is sufficiently ambitious.	Disagree
Restoration strategies in Spain sufficiently address habitats that are at risk of disappearing.	Disagree
Nature-based solutions are sufficiently prioritised in ecosystem-restoration policy and implementation in Spain.	Don't Know
Implementation of Spain's Green Infrastructure, Connectivity and Ecological Restoration Strategy is sufficiently advanced to support ecosystem restoration.	Disagree
Spain's key green-infrastructure elements are sufficiently identified to support restoration planning.	Agree
Ecosystem-restoration measures in Spain sufficiently improve ecological connectivity.	Disagree
Preparation of Spain's National Restoration Plan is sufficiently advanced to support timely implementation of national restoration objectives.	Agree
Ecosystem-restoration measures in Spain are being implemented at a pace sufficient to achieve the national restoration objective.	Strongly Disagree
The current lack of area-under-restoration data significantly limits the ability to assess restoration progress in Spain.	Strongly Agree

NGO reactions to selected quotations from the 7NR

Quote from the 7NR

Se prevé que los datos necesarios para el cálculo del indicador 2.1 tanto en España como a nivel Unión Europea estarán disponibles en una etapa posterior, en cumplimiento de las obligaciones de seguimiento y notificación del Reglamento de la UE sobre la Restauración de la Naturaleza (RRN)" [English translation: It is anticipated that the data required to calculate indicator 2.1—both for Spain and at the European Union level—will become available at a later stage, in compliance with the monitoring and reporting obligations set out in the EU Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR).]

NGO comment

"Spain's latest National Report acknowledges that progress on ecosystem recovery and restoration remains insufficient and that data on the area under restoration is not currently available. Whilst Civil society organisations will advocate for an ambitious restoration target in the National Restoration Plan, it should nevertheless be recognised that Spain has legal obligations that precede the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. Namely, under the national Law 42/2007 on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, the competent public authorities shall restore the integrity of ecosystems, where appropriate."

C) Cross-check with IPBES Assessments

IPBES Nexus Assessment – cross-sector integration

Spain's framework creates potential synergies across biodiversity, water management, climate adaptation, disaster-risk reduction and ecological connectivity. From an IPBES Nexus perspective, however, the decisive question is whether these links are governed jointly rather than through parallel sectoral programmes. The NGO evidence points to a material weakness in cross-sector integration, notably the reported absence of the agriculture ministry from the cited governance framework. Because agricultural policy,

water allocation and land-use incentives directly affect restoration feasibility, this gap may constrain delivery even where environmental planning is comparatively advanced.

IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

The strategy, Work Programme and forthcoming National Restoration Plan may support institutional change, but the evidence does not yet demonstrate transformative change in the IPBES sense. The reviewed material is stronger on plans, structures and information systems than on altered incentives, redistribution of resources, accountability, long-term finance or changes to practices that drive degradation. Transformative potential will depend on whether the planning architecture changes land- and water-use decisions, secures additional and durable finance, embeds inclusive participation, and measures ecological recovery rather than administrative output.

D) Overall assessment

Spain has established a meaningful restoration-policy architecture and relevant monitoring institutions, and the forthcoming National Restoration Plan offers an opportunity to connect these elements to the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. The current evidence nevertheless remains insufficient for a robust national Target 2 progress judgement. The formal headline indicator has no data; no official progress category is reconstructed; and the report does not provide a consolidated baseline, area under effective restoration or nationally verified ecological outcomes. NGO evidence reinforces concerns about operational clarity, timetable, finance, additionality and cross-sector governance. The most defensible conclusion is therefore that strategic preparation and institutional capacity are visible, while outcome-based implementation evidence remains incomplete.

Sources

- Spain Seventh National Report
- Spain NBSAP context
- NGO Questionnaire Spain
- IPBES Nexus Assessment; IPBES Transformative Change Assessment

5. Best practice examples from across Europe

a) Denmark: Skjern Å

Restoring a meandering river and its floodplains changed the way agricultural land was used. Areas that had previously been drained and farmed intensively were to be converted back into wetlands. This created a conflict between agricultural production interests and public objectives for nature conservation and recreation.

The project's planning process relied on land consolidation and public land-policy instruments rather than solely on the voluntary relinquishment of land-use rights. The socio-economic assessment considered not only construction costs, but also losses in agricultural production, savings in pumping costs, recreation, fisheries, hunting, water

quality and biodiversity values. A scientific cost–benefit analysis made these different public and private impacts comparable.
The analysis provided decision-makers with a broader basis for decision-making than a simple calculation of the project's construction costs. It demonstrated that costs may fall on individual land users, while many of the benefits accrue to society as a whole—an important argument for public funding and compensation.

b) Finland: Landscape Rewilding Programme – Snowchange Cooperative

The Landscape Rewilding Programme, implemented by the Snowchange Cooperative, is a large-scale ecological restoration initiative combining ecosystem recovery with community-based management and traditional ecological knowledge. Based in North Karelia but operating across Finland, the programme aims to address biodiversity loss and climate change through scientifically informed restoration while drawing on the knowledge and long-term experience of local communities. By 2025, activities extended across five principal catchment areas: Koitajoki, Jukajoki, Näätämöjoki, Kuivasjärvi and Iijoki. Snowchange reports ownership of approximately 8,500 hectares of recovering land, alongside land concessions covering more than 60,000 hectares.

A flagship example is Linnunsuo, a 110-hectare restored wetland near the village of Selkie in North Karelia. According to Snowchange, ecological restoration has transformed Linnunsuo into habitat supporting more than 200 bird species, alongside mammals including otter, moose and wolverine. The site combines restoration with community-based governance: Linnunsuo is registered as a community-controlled area and includes an 88-hectare strictly protected area under national conservation measures. Local hunters participate in its management, including control of invasive mink and raccoon dogs, while limited harvesting of waterbirds is permitted.

The programme is particularly relevant as an example of restoration extending beyond individual habitat interventions towards landscape-scale recovery and long-term stewardship. Its approach explicitly integrates scientifically based restoration with traditional and local knowledge, community control and biodiversity conservation. The programme also links restoration to climate objectives, including measurement of greenhouse-gas dynamics at rewilding sites. In this respect, the Snowchange approach illustrates how ecological restoration can be embedded within broader catchment-scale management while maintaining strong local involvement in the governance and long-term management of restored ecosystems.

c) Germany: Let rivers flow again: Lower Havel river restoration

Through the "Lower Havel Lowlands between Pritzerbe and Gnevsdorf" large-scale conservation project, NABU is carrying out Europe's largest river restoration project.

For decades, the Havel was modified to meet human demands. Bank reinforcements, alterations to the river's course and the disconnection of floodplains impaired the

connection between the river and its floodplain. Aquatic vegetation and reed beds declined, while valuable wetland habitats were lost or altered.

NABU began its first volunteer-led restoration activities as early as the 1980s. Following extensive preliminary studies, the “Lower Havel Lowlands” large-scale conservation project was launched in 2005. The measures were prepared through a management and development plan and gradually implemented from 2009 onwards.

The aim is not to return the Havel to an artificially defined historical state. Rather, the project seeks to enable natural river and floodplain processes to operate more freely again.

From a socio-economic perspective, the Havel is a particularly relevant best-practice example because it is not being implemented as an isolated nature conservation project. The project affects land ownership, agriculture, water management, navigation, municipal development and recreation.

In its interim review of 1 October 2026, the Brandenburg state government explicitly emphasised that municipalities, districts, the agricultural sector and businesses had been able to contribute their interests at every stage. According to the ministry, the management and development plan was prepared through a participatory process and included measures that were supported locally.

Planning before implementation: Extensive preliminary studies and a management and development plan provide a shared technical foundation.

Participation as part of the project architecture: Municipalities, land users and landowners are involved in developing the measures rather than being confronted with them only after decisions have been taken.

Long-term responsibility: A permanent project organisation, public funding and cooperation across several levels of government enable implementation over many years.

Key success factors: Strong local roots, including individuals who work over the long term to build acceptance locally; perseverance, as lengthy planning and approval processes had to be completed; and continuous financing through a combination of public funding from the federal and state governments and the EU, as well as private funding from companies and donations.

d) Hungary: Szigetköz – Donau-Auen und Wasserbewirtschaftung

Earlier river diversions and hydraulic engineering interventions had disconnected the side channels from the Danube and locally lowered groundwater levels. At the same time, agriculture, nature conservation, fisheries, forestry, tourism and settlements require reliable—but partly differing—water levels and volumes.

Restoration was carried out gradually through water-supply systems and hydraulic engineering measures. A Szigetköz Operational Committee brought together representatives from water management, nature conservation, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism and municipalities. It considers proposed changes on a case-by-case basis and regularly discusses operational issues. A 2024 study also documents interviews with mayors, questionnaires and workshops involving more than 200 people. These activities generated 103 project ideas, which were assessed according to their potential for integration and stakeholder attitudes.

The case is particularly strong in terms of long-term conflict management: not only planning, but also ongoing operations are understood as a process of negotiation. The shared assessment method helps identify projects that serve multiple objectives and enables particularly contentious proposals to be recognised at an early stage.

The 2024 study primarily analyses participation and the prioritisation of future projects; it does not provide evidence that all newly proposed measures have already been implemented or proven successful. The ecological improvements are the result of a longer-term, multi-stage process.

e) Hungary and Slovakia: LIFE Danube floodplains

The wetlands suffered not only from locally altered habitats, but also from a broader water-management problem: the volume and timing of water releases from a reservoir did not correspond to the ecological needs of the floodplain. Restoration works alone could not resolve this constraint.

Local stakeholders used petitions, communication and negotiations with the responsible water authorities and the reservoir operator. This resulted in a new operating regime with coordinated water-release volumes and timing, as well as a more appropriate flooding regime. In parallel, side channels and canals were reopened, barriers removed, culverts replaced and supply channels dredged.

The decisive lever was to address the institutional cause of the problem rather than only the visible damage. The agreement on water management enabled the structural measures to become ecologically effective. The example also shows that restoration must extend across administrative and sectoral boundaries.

The European Commission documents a functioning agreement on the water regime and improved water supply. This provides strong evidence of implementation; however, it should not be presented as the complete restoration of the entire Danube ecosystem.

f) Portugal: LIFE+ Terras do Priolo (2014–2019)

The LIFE+ Terras do Priolo project formed part of a longer-term restoration programme in the Pico da Vara/Ribeira do Guilherme Special Protection Area on São Miguel Island, Azores. Building on earlier restoration measures, the project contributed to the development and

testing of approaches for restoring native habitats under the steep and erosion-prone conditions characteristic of the area. In Mata dos Bispos, activities included trials of nature-based engineering techniques designed to stabilise slopes and control landslides, as well as tests for managing forest stands dominated by the invasive tree *Pittosporum undulatum* on steep terrain. These interventions were particularly important because invasive alien vegetation, steep slopes and hydrological processes interact to increase habitat degradation and erosion risks.

The project therefore contributed not only directly to habitat restoration but also to the development of practical restoration methods that could subsequently be applied at a larger scale. According to the final Mata dos Bispos restoration report, the experience and results generated by LIFE+ Terras do Priolo constituted an important basis for planning the restoration measures subsequently implemented under LIFE IP Azores Natura. In this sense, Terras do Priolo represents an intermediate stage in a long-term restoration trajectory: earlier measures established the basis for controlling invasive species and recovering native vegetation, while Terras do Priolo developed and tested restoration techniques suited to difficult terrain, which could then be expanded and integrated into landscape-scale restoration.

g) Portugal: LIFE IP Azores Natura – Ecological restoration of Mata dos Bispos (2020–2025)

Under LIFE IP Azores Natura, extensive ecological restoration was undertaken in Mata dos Bispos between 2020 and 2025. The intervention addressed highly degraded forest and riparian habitats affected by invasive alien species, unstable soils and alterations to natural watercourses. Measures included invasive species control in the tree and understory layers, removal of exotic forest stands, planting of native trees and shrubs, slope and riverbank stabilisation using nature-based engineering, rehabilitation of watercourses and improved surface-water drainage. Rodent control was additionally introduced in priority areas. The project incorporated areas restored under preceding LIFE projects, thereby consolidating a continuous restored habitat core of approximately 41 ha.

More than 120,000 endemic plants were established, with an average survival rate exceeding 80%. Monitoring combined field surveys, permanent plots and transects with drone imagery, photogrammetry and GIS analysis. Results indicate reduced invasive-species cover, successful establishment and growth of native vegetation, and improved stability of soils and watercourse margins. However, monitoring also detected renewed establishment of invasive species, particularly Leycesteria formosa in the understory, demonstrating that initial restoration success does not eliminate the need for continued management. The project therefore illustrates an adaptive, long-term approach in which invasive-species control, revegetation, erosion and hydrological management, and ecological monitoring are

integrated rather than treated as separate interventions. Continued maintenance and monitoring are identified as essential for securing restoration outcomes over the long term.

h) Spain: Restoring nature restoring joy: Eco Astillero XXI

El Astillero is a town in Santander Bay in Cantabria, northern Spain, known for its shipyard ("astillero" is the Spanish word for shipyard). It is also surrounded by marshes, which are ancient nesting grounds for migratory birds. Throughout the 20th century, these marshes suffered immense damage. Mining for iron, and the deposit of excess sediments, completely wrecked the landscape. On top of that, auxiliary industries were occupying land along the estuary, and after the mines closed down; the ancient marshes were taken over by invasive, non-native plants such as eucalyptus and pampas grass. The place was in an appalling state. And it was completely inaccessible to the local population. At the turn of the century, El Astillero's young mayor wanted to do things differently. He wanted to restore the degraded landscapes, and create a large public space for all to enjoy. That idea would become the Eco Astillero XXI project: a new, sustainable future for a new century. The project is run in partnership by El Astillero and SEO/BirdLife, the nature protection NGO for which I work. We restored 60 hectares of heavily degraded land. We removed invasive species such as pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*), restored the intertidal area by opening seawalls, created new lagoons, removed landfills, built a network of twenty-five ponds, and re-planted native vegetation. In total, we planted 40,000 trees! We also created a 21km-long network of trails and bike lanes. The project started in 1999, and we're still maintaining the site today.

As you can see, it was a lot of work! But it was well worth it: what used to be an inaccessible and degraded landscape in a crowded city is now a lush green space for everyone to enjoy. It's hard to overstate how important it is for people to have nature in their lives – for both their mental and physical health. Today, people are walking, cycling, picnicking, and just enjoying nature! I think that everyone who experienced the lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic knows how precious it is to have access to nature near your home.

The **Eco Astillero XXI project** benefits the community in various ways. Thanks to the regional government's funding, every year, unemployed people are hired to work on the site: removing invasive plants, digging ponds, planting trees, setting up nest boxes, and more. The project has employed 560 people so far!

I hope that our success with Eco Astillero XXI inspires other post-industrial cities to make space for nature; and inspires the European Commission to fund such projects. There's enormous potential to increase people's quality of life, create jobs, and heal nature in the process. Moreover, our experience has shown that nature restoration could be achieved with a relatively modest budget, compared to the benefits it generates

i) Sweden: Restoration of Coastal Meadows and Oak Pastures in Nyköping

The restoration project in Nyköping, Sweden, provides a practical example of how the green infrastructure approach can be implemented to strengthen ecological connectivity while delivering biodiversity and societal benefits. The project focused on the restoration of coastal meadows at Arnö Strandpark and the rehabilitation of nearby oak pastures, both of which represent species-rich habitats of high ecological value.

Restoration measures included the removal of encroaching vegetation, such as alder, willow and birch, to reconnect previously fragmented habitat patches and re-establish open landscapes. The project also introduced and maintained extensive grazing as a long-term management tool. In the oak pastures, selective clearing and fencing were undertaken to facilitate grazing and secure suitable habitat conditions for numerous species associated with old oak trees. These interventions improved habitat quality, enhanced landscape connectivity, and supported the conservation of biodiversity, including bird species and other organisms dependent on semi-natural grasslands and veteran trees.

In addition to ecological benefits, the project generated significant social value. The restored areas provide attractive recreational spaces within close proximity to residential neighbourhoods and have been positively received by local residents. The project demonstrates how nature restoration can simultaneously enhance biodiversity, improve human well-being and strengthen public appreciation of natural landscapes.

Several factors contributed to the success of the initiative. First, the project was based on strong cooperation between Nyköping Municipality, the County Administrative Board of Södermanland, and local land-management actors. Second, restoration activities were coupled with long-term maintenance measures, particularly continued grazing management, ensuring that ecological gains can be sustained over time. Third, the project aligned with Sweden's broader green infrastructure framework, which emphasizes landscape-scale planning, ecological connectivity, stakeholder dialogue, and the use of regional action plans to guide restoration efforts. This combination of strategic planning, inter-institutional collaboration, and long-term stewardship has been central to achieving durable restoration outcomes.

Outlook: From successful projects to restoration at scale

Looking ahead, the challenge for nature restoration is not only to demonstrate that restoration can work, but to translate experience from individual projects into action at a much larger scale. A recent portfolio by BirdLife Europe and Central Asia (RESTORING NATURE IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA- A bold vision for healthier landscapes and communities) illustrates this emerging direction. It presents nine restoration sites across Europe and Central Asia, covering wetlands, forests, grasslands, rivers, agricultural landscapes and marine ecosystems. BirdLife combines locally rooted partnerships with scientific approaches and species conservation, while explicitly linking ecological restoration with local communities and sustainable land and resource use.

Importantly, many of the restoration measures presented in the portfolio are forward-looking rather than completed interventions. They include ambitious plans for landscape-

scale restoration and improved management, such as restoring wetlands and transforming agricultural practices on Lemnos, addressing water management and agricultural pressures in the Gediz Delta, and reconnecting river and forest ecosystems in Armenia's Yeghegis Valley. The portfolio therefore provides less evidence of completed restoration outcomes than a perspective on where restoration could go next if sufficient investment, governance and cooperation are mobilised.

This perspective reinforces a broader lesson from the examples examined in this report: achieving restoration at the scale required by international and European commitments will require moving beyond isolated interventions towards approaches that address the underlying drivers of degradation and integrate restoration with agriculture, water management, forestry and other forms of land and resource use. BirdLife's portfolio points towards this next step, while its future implementation will provide an important opportunity to assess whether such ambitions can be translated into measurable ecological recovery at landscape scale.

6. Key findings and policy recommendations

6.1 Key Findings

Restoration policy is advancing, but implementation remains insufficient

All eight countries have policies, programmes or projects contributing to ecosystem restoration. Restoration is increasingly embedded in biodiversity strategies, while the EU Nature Restoration Law is driving new planning and governance processes.

However, the evidence does not yet demonstrate delivery at the scale required by Target 2 of the KMGBF. At the time this report was developed several National Restoration Plans were still under preparation for the European Commission, and even comparatively advanced countries acknowledge that the current pace and level of resourcing are insufficient.

The overall picture is one of stronger political recognition and institutional preparation thanks to the legally binding EU Restoration Law, but limited evidence of national-scale ecological recovery.

Planning progress is too often treated as ecological progress

National Reports frequently describe coordination bodies, strategies, stakeholder processes, monitoring systems and funding programmes. These are necessary enabling conditions, but they are not restoration outcomes.

Germany illustrates this distinction clearly. Its federal–state coordination and stakeholder participation are comparatively advanced, and so are available finances, yet the available information does not show that the country is on track on the basis of restored area or ecological outcomes.

Finland and Portugal provide stronger implementation evidence through established ecosystem-specific programmes and quantitative reporting. Nevertheless, government and NGO assessments agree that restoration remains insufficient in scale and resources.

Across the cases, the decisive question is no longer whether policies exist, but whether they produce additional, permanent and measurable ecological improvements and whether they go beyond just an ecological process and tackle mainstreaming of biodiversity across all levels of government and across all sectors.

National reporting focuses on activities rather than outcomes

The Seventh National Reports commonly document:

- strategies and administrative processes;
- numbers of projects or measures;
- expenditure and stakeholder participation;
- new indicators and monitoring systems.

They are less consistent in demonstrating:

- the extent and condition of degraded ecosystems;
- whether measures are additional;
- whether ecological integrity and connectivity have improved;
- whether benefits will be maintained;
- whether gains exceed continuing degradation.

“Area under restoration” is important but does not by itself demonstrate effective recovery. **A credible assessment requires a theory of change linking the degradation baseline, restoration measures and lasting ecological outcomes.**

Current reports do not provide a sufficiently comparable picture

Reporting structures, terminology and detail differ considerably. Similar official progress assessments may therefore rest on very different evidence: planning processes in one country, implemented measures or ecological monitoring in another.

Following Reports on the KMGBF should distinguish clearly between:

- policies and plans;
- implementation activities;
- restoration outputs;
- ecological outcomes;
- national net recovery.

Without this distinction, collective reporting risks overstating progress.

Continuing degradation is not adequately reflected

Several reports acknowledge ongoing pressures, including land conversion, peatland drainage, intensive agriculture and forestry, pollution, infrastructure development and hydromorphological modification. Yet restoration gains and continuing losses are rarely combined in a national net balance.

Italy's land-use figures demonstrate the problem: the area returned from artificial to non-artificial land remains far smaller than the area newly converted. Finland reports substantial restoration programmes while also recording continued peatland drainage and other land-use pressures.

Target 2 reporting should therefore assess whether ecosystem extent, condition, integrity and connectivity are improving overall.

NGO assessments are generally more critical

NGO experts recognise useful programmes, governance improvements and stronger monitoring. Nevertheless, they generally identify greater shortcomings than government reports, particularly regarding:

- insufficient scale and financing;
- weak spatial prioritisation;
- limited outcome evidence;
- continued degradation by other sectors;
- inadequate policy coherence.

Government and NGO assessments converge most clearly where official reports acknowledge data shortages, insufficient resources or slow progress. Divergence is greatest where governments infer progress mainly from planning or programme activity.

The Nexus perspective is recognised but not operationalised

National strategies and administrative setups increasingly connect restoration with climate adaptation, water management, food systems, health and disaster-risk reduction. Strong synergies are particularly apparent in peatland, wetland, river and catchment restoration. This is clear progress, largely thanks to IPBES but also discourse started by the EU Restoration Law.

However, these links seldom guide spatial prioritisation, joint financing or integrated monitoring. Trade-offs with agriculture, forestry, infrastructure, energy and settlement are rarely addressed through transparent decision-making mechanisms. The big potential to create many societal and economic benefits through a single investment in nature restoration is still largely untapped.

Countries increasingly use the language of integration, but implementation remains largely sectoral.

Transformative change remains the weakest dimension

Most approaches focus on projects, programmes and institutions rather than the underlying drivers of degradation, including:

- harmful subsidies and incentives;
- unsustainable land- and water-use practices;
- conflicting sectoral policies;
- short-term investment decisions;
- production and consumption patterns.

Restoration gains risk being cancelled out where other policies continue to generate degradation. Transformative implementation therefore requires changes not only to restoration practice, but also to the economic and political conditions shaping land and resource use.

Promising practice exists, but needs to be scaled

The countries examined offer promising approaches, including ecosystem-specific programmes, peatland and wetland restoration, river-connectivity measures, participatory planning, multi-level governance and research-based monitoring.

Czechia provides useful building blocks through ecological-connectivity and spatial-planning instruments, developing monitoring systems and indicators, including work related to free-flowing rivers and invasive alien species.

Finland stands out for its established ecosystem-specific programme architecture, including HELMI, SOTKA, AHTI, NOUSU and METSO, as well as comparatively strong quantitative reporting and monitoring capacity.

Germany demonstrates strengths in federal–state coordination, early stakeholder participation and the Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity.

Italy provides relevant examples of river, wetland and marine restoration, complemented by emerging cross-ministerial coordination between environment and agriculture authorities.

The Netherlands combines substantial biodiversity-monitoring capacity with multi-level cooperation between national government, provinces, water authorities and municipalities and a broad portfolio of restoration-relevant programmes.

Poland demonstrates broad ecosystem coverage, with restoration-related measures addressing peatlands, wetlands, river valleys, coastal habitats, forests and grasslands, alongside the preparation of a comprehensive national restoration plan.

Portugal shows comparatively strong strategic and technical preparation, including coordination across mainland Portugal, the Azores and Madeira, ecosystem-specific planning and the development of monitoring approaches.

Spain has established a strategic framework through its Green Infrastructure, Connectivity and Ecological Restoration Strategy and Work Programme, supported by hydrological reserves and a comparatively developed biodiversity-information architecture.

Europe therefore does not lack technical knowledge or practical experience. The main challenge is to scale successful approaches, connect them across landscapes and embed them in coherent national policy.

6.2 Policy Recommendations

As the EU Nature Restoration Regulation provides an adequate framework, the policy recommendations in this EU-oriented report focus primarily on its implementation by EU Member States. Outside the EU, Parties should also consider which elements of the Regulation could be incorporated into national policy frameworks. At regional and global levels, it is critical to facilitate the exchange of experience and expertise among Parties to the CBD.

Move from planning to implementation

EU Member States should adopt and implement ambitious National Restoration Plans containing:

- spatially explicit priorities;
- ecosystem-specific objectives;
- milestones for 2030, 2040 and 2050;
- clear institutional responsibilities;
- implementation timetables;
- transparent financing plans.

Plans should distinguish existing measures from additional action required under the EU Nature Restoration Law.

Prioritise ecological need and multiple benefits

Restoration priorities should reflect:

- ecosystem degradation and recovery potential;
- ecological integrity and connectivity;

- benefits for species and habitats;
- water retention and quality;
- climate mitigation and adaptation;
- disaster-risk reduction;
- health and community resilience;
- long-term feasibility.

This would translate the IPBES Nexus approach into practical spatial decision-making.

Measure ecological outcomes

Monitoring should distinguish between:

- financial inputs;
- measures implemented;
- area under restoration;
- changes in ecosystem condition;
- connectivity and ecological integrity;
- species and habitat responses;
- permanence of gains.

Reported hectares should count as effective restoration only where measures are additional, ecologically appropriate, monitored and maintained.

Report national net recovery

Member States should assess restoration gains alongside continuing degradation, including land conversion, habitat deterioration, drainage, pollution and fragmentation.

Restoration cannot be considered successful if gains are outweighed by damage elsewhere. Reporting should therefore show whether ecosystem extent and condition are improving overall.

Secure adequate long-term finance

The next EU Multiannual Financial Framework should establish dedicated and ring-fenced funding for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, including a strong and standalone LIFE programme. National and regional spending plans should include binding biodiversity spending floors and reflect the financing needs identified in National Restoration Plans and Natura 2000 Prioritised Action Frameworks. Biodiversity objectives must also be mainstreamed across agricultural, regional, cohesion, marine and climate funding, while environmentally harmful subsidies and investments are excluded through an enforceable “do no significant harm” principle. Funding should be linked to measurable ecological outcomes and support long-term management, monitoring and implementation

capacity. At the same time, Member States need to mobilise additional resources at national and regional levels.

Private finance can complement, but must not replace, sustained public investment and should meet strict requirements for additionality, permanence and verification.

Align sectoral policies and incentives

Restoration objectives must be integrated into agriculture, forestry, water, fisheries, infrastructure, transport, energy, spatial planning and public finance.

Governments should identify and reform policies and subsidies that continue to cause degradation. In particular, large parts of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy remain an obstacle to successful restoration because of incentives for intensification and insufficient funding for farmers who want to participate in restoration measures. Restoration cannot compensate indefinitely for damage generated by other sectors.

Strengthen integrated and adaptive governance

National Restoration Plans should connect ministries, regional and local authorities, science, civil society and land users through:

- shared spatial priorities;
- compatible data and indicators;
- clear responsibilities;
- transparent conflict-resolution mechanisms;
- regular review and adaptation;
- mechanisms to redirect funding when results are insufficient.

Ensure meaningful participation

Participation should go beyond consultation. Civil society, local communities, land managers and scientists should be able to influence priorities, site selection, programme design, financing, monitoring and review.

Reports should explain clearly who participated, which proposals were considered and how participation affected decisions.

Improve consistency and credibility of CBD and EU level reporting

CBD and EU reporting processes should establish common requirements and a shared interpretation of "area under effective restoration".

Reports should clearly separate:

- policy ambition;
- plans and institutions;

- measures implemented;
- area under effective restoration;
- ecological outcomes;
- continuing degradation;
- net national progress.

Use the EU Nature Restoration Regulation as a transformative framework

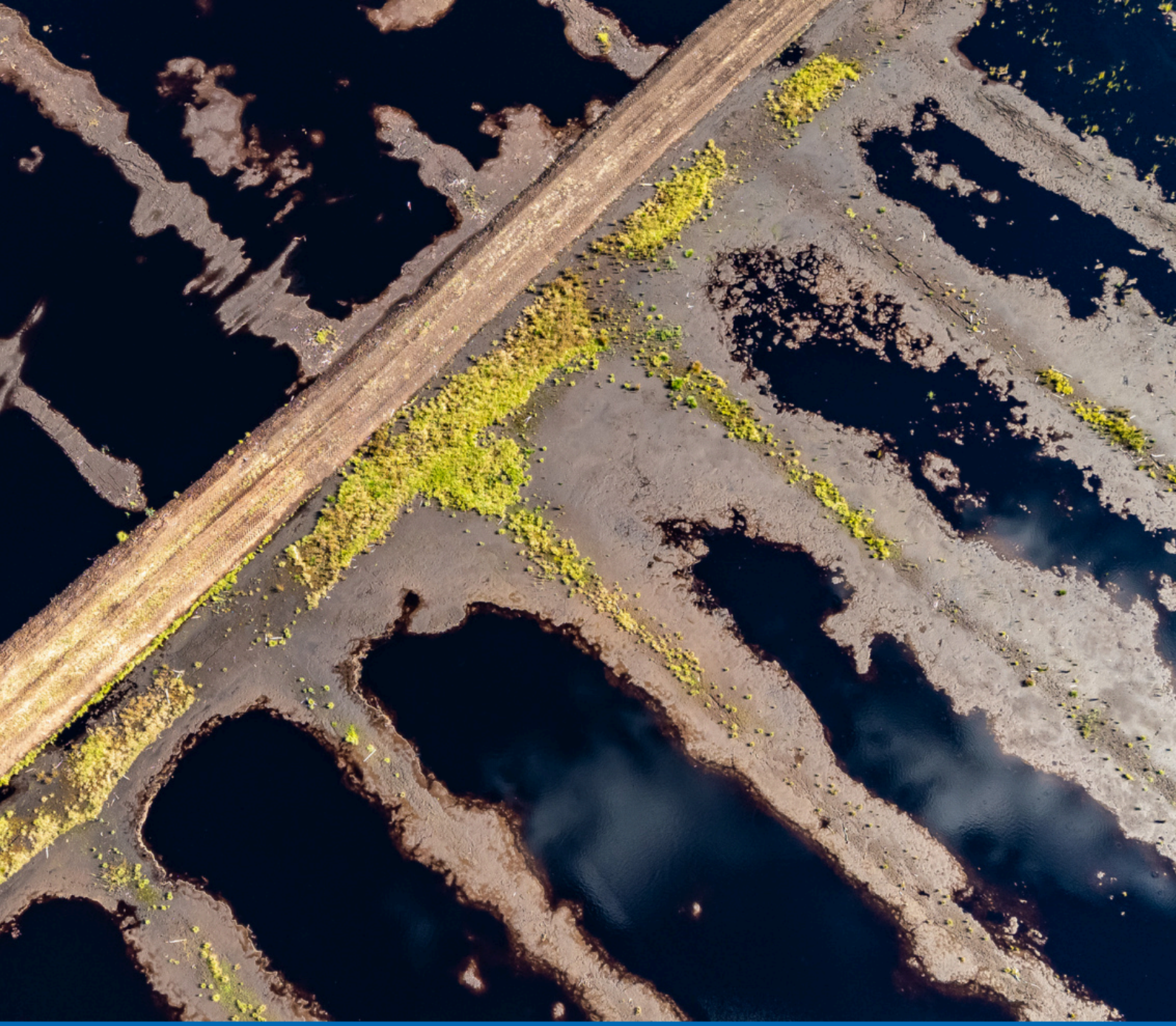
The Regulation should not be implemented as a narrow compliance exercise. National Restoration Plans should use it to align biodiversity, climate, water, agricultural, health and economic policy; reform harmful incentives; redirect financial flows; and support socially fair changes in high-impact sectors.

6.3 Conclusion

Europe has established an advanced legal framework and possesses substantial scientific knowledge and practical experience. Yet a significant gap remains between political ambition and measurable ecosystem recovery.

Closing it requires a shift:

- from words to delivery
- from plans to implementation;
- from projects to landscape-scale recovery;
- from isolated action to policy coherence;
- from repairing damage to addressing its underlying drivers.



10/2026

NABU (The Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union) e.V.
Charitéstraße 3, 10117 Berlin, Germany; Photos: NABU/Kaspars Teilans

This study was supported by the Allianz Foundation.

www.NABU.com