Forests in the Nature Restoration Regulation

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Kim De Rijck, DG Environment

env-biodiversity@ec.europa.eu

European Commission

The need for a legal instrument on nature restoration

Continuing ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss across the EU

Existing framework not enough

- **Protection needs to be strengthened but is not enough**
- **A reinforced approach on large-scale restoration is needed**

Regulation - applies directly, no transposition (urgency!)

Complement & build on existing policies

Focus on **synergies** between **climate change** and biodiversity

Status of forest habitats in the EU

Forest under Annex I of Habitats Directive

- 357 952 km² (9,2% of EU terrestrial area)*
- 69 habitats types: boreal (6), temperate (32), Mediterranean and Macaronesian (18), mountainous coniferous (13)

Annex I forests: condition status

- 84 % of assessments unfavourable
- Among which, 17% deteriorating trends
- Additional stress by climate change

Annex I forest habitats: restoration needs

- At least 79 210 km² (22 %) to be restored
- 116 444 km² (33%) of unknown status
- At least 3 500 km² (1%) to be re-created

EU forest condition

- Across 44 forest types
- From 0.566 in 2000 to 0.585 in 2018

EU forest carbon stocks and sequestration

- Potential stock: 10,3-32,3 GtCO2e
- Potential sequestration: 367 MtCO2e/yr
- Use of wood and timber

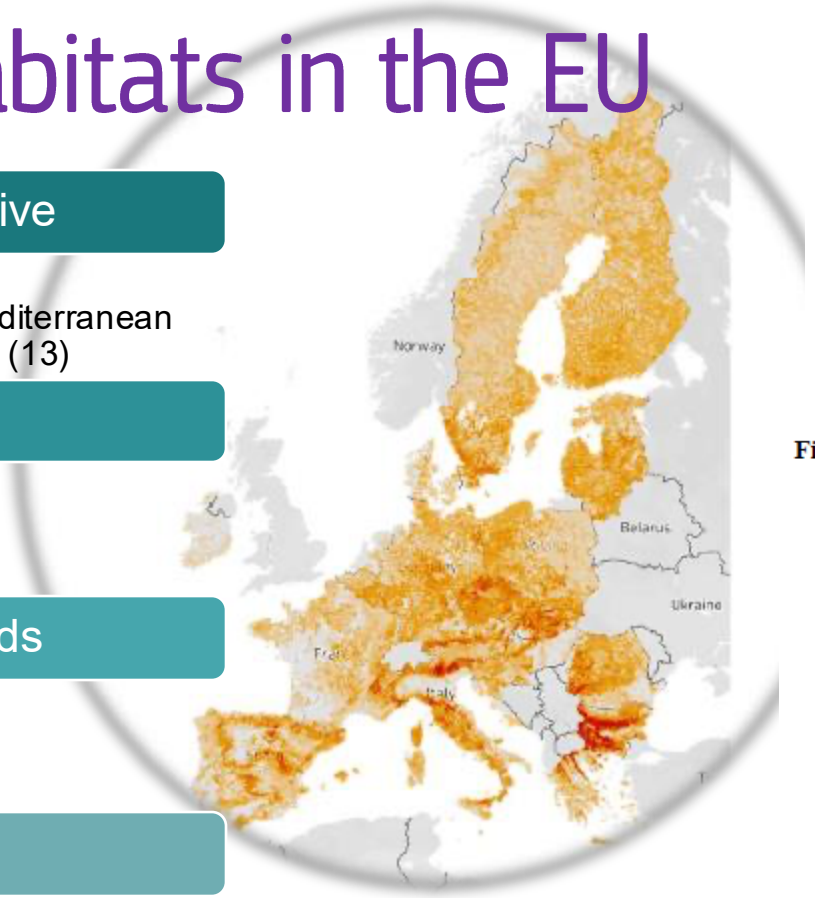


Figure 1 – Conservation status of forests at the EU level (in percentage)

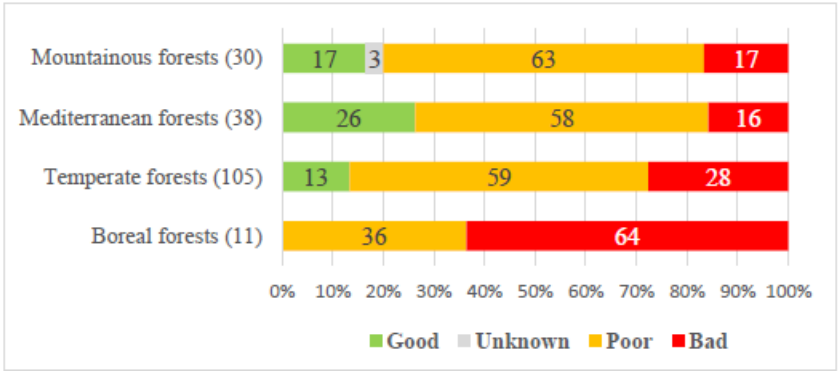


Figure 2 – Conservation status trends of forests at the EU level (in percentage)

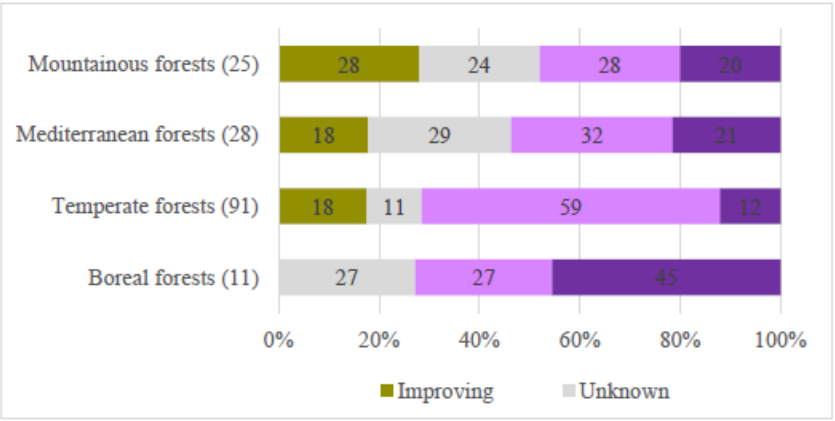
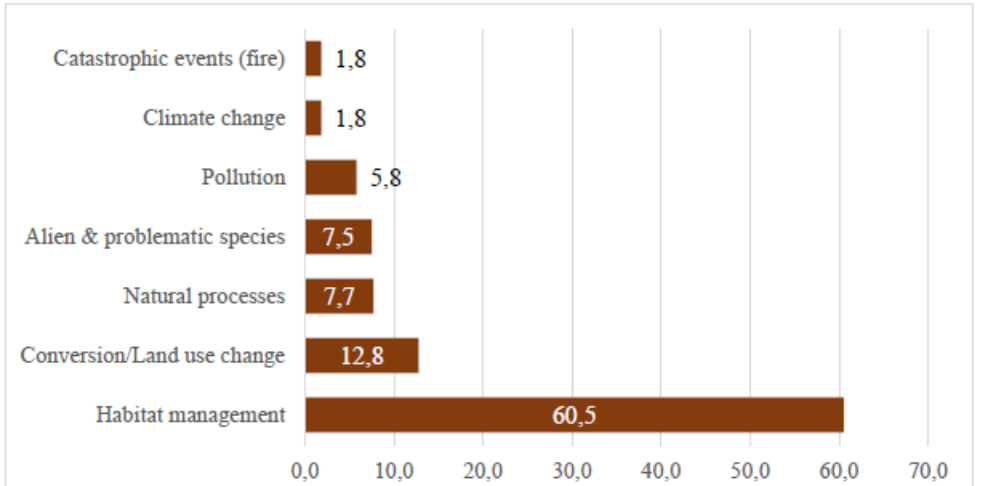


Figure 3 – Pressures reported for forest habitats (in percentage)



*Based on Habitats Directive Article 17 reports (*excluding Romania)*
Impact assessment of the Nature Restoration Law proposal. Annex VIII-b (part 7/12).
Biodiversity Information System for Europe: Forests (europa.eu)
Maes, J., Bruzón, A.G., Barredo, J.I. *et al.* Accounting for forest condition in Europe based on an international statistical standard. *Nat Commun* **14**, 3723 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-023-39434-0

Overall structure of the NRR

Overarching objective

Restoration targets

Implementation framework

Financing

General objectives

- Long-term and sustained recovery of **biodiverse and resilient ecosystems** through the restoration of degraded ecosystems
- Contribute to climate change **mitigation**, climate change **adaptation** and **land degradation neutrality**
- Enhance **food security**
- Meeting the EU's **international commitments**

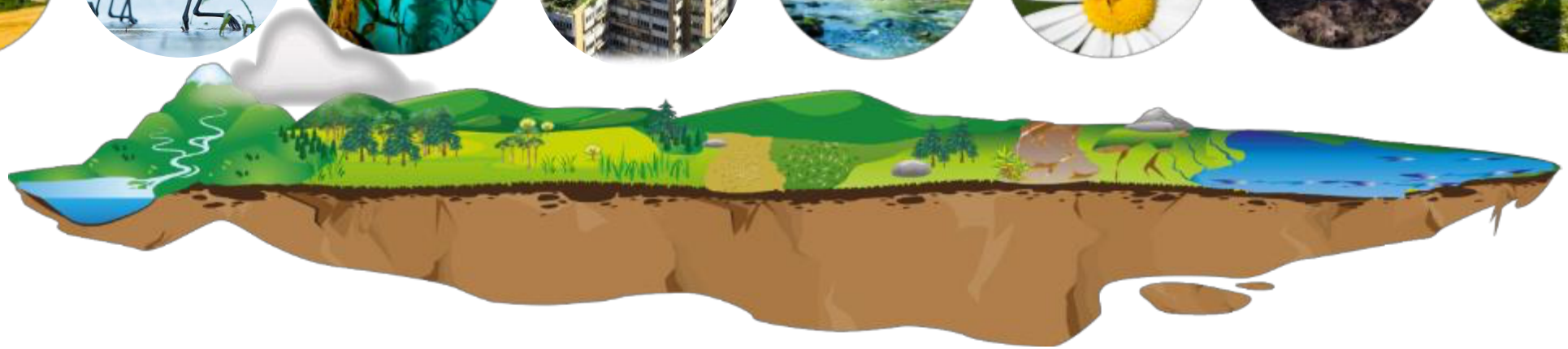
Commitment to put restoration measures

- On 20% of EU's land and sea areas **by 2030**
- On all ecosystems in need of restoration **by 2050**

Article 3(3): 'restoration' means the **process of actively or passively assisting the recovery** of an ecosystem *in order to improve its structure and functions with the aim of conserving or enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience [...]*

Specific restoration targets

- Protected Habitat Types
- Habitats of protected species
- Marine Habitats
- Urban ecosystems
- River connectivity
- Pollinators
- Agro-ecosystems
- Forest ecosystems
- 3 billion additional trees by 2030



Terrestrial, coastal and freshwater ecosystems (Art. 4)

Annex I habitats as under the Habitat Directive

- Over 230 habitats in 7 groups
  - wetlands (coastal and inland); grasslands and other pastoral habitats; river, lake, alluvial and riparian habitats; forests; steppe, heath and scrub habitats; rocky and dune habitats

Improvement to good condition of area not in good condition

- 2030 – at least 30% of total area of all groups
- 2040/2050 – at least 60%/90% of each group

Re-establishment for reaching favourable reference area

- 2030/2040/2050 – 30%/60%/100% of additional area for each group

Restoration of habitats of species

- Quality, quantity, connectivity

Knowledge gap filling

- 2030 – 90% of total area of all groups
- 2040 – all areas of all habitat types
- Best available knowledge and the latest scientific evidence

Non-significant deterioration requirement

- Area where good condition has been reached
- Area in good condition or necessary to reach restoration targets

Derogations and flexibilities

- Very common and wide-spread habitats
- Re-establishment at 90% if 100% not possible
- Non-deterioration: national biogeographic option,
- Non-deterioration: derogation for force-majeure, unavoidable habitat transformations directly caused by climate change, overriding public interest, action or inaction of third country
- Further derogation for renewable energy and defence activities

Forest ecosystems (Art. 12)

Enhance forest biodiversity

- In addition to Art 4 (i.e. not only Annex I habitats)
- Taking into the risk of forest fires

Indicators-based targets

- Achieve an increasing trend at national level until satisfactory levels are achieved.
- 1 mandatory indicator
  - ***Common forest bird index***
- At least 6 out of 7 indicators:
  - ***Standing deadwood;***
  - ***Lying deadwood;***
  - ***Share of forest with uneven age structure;***
  - ***Forest connectivity;***
  - ***Stock of organic carbon;***
  - ***Share of forests dominated by native tree species;***
  - ***Tree species diversity.***

Exemption

- Large scale force majeure (incl. wildfire);
- Unavoidable habitat transformations directly caused by climate change.

Forest ecosystems targets: indicators: Annex VI

ANNEX VI

LIST OF BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS FOR FOREST ECOSYSTEMS REFERRED TO IN ARTICLE 12(2) AND 12(3)

Indicator	Description, units, and methodology for determining and monitoring the indicator
Standing deadwood	**Description:** This indicator shows the amount of non-living standing woody biomass in forest and other wooded land. **Unit:** m^3/ha. **Methodology:** as developed and used by FOREST EUROPE, *State of Europe's Forests 2020*, FOREST EUROPE 2020, and in the description of national forest inventories in *Tomppo E. et al.*, National Forest Inventories, *Pathways for Common Reporting*, Springer, 2010, and taking into account the methodology as set out in Annex V to Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 in accordance with the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories.
Lying deadwood	**Description:** This indicator shows the amount of non-living woody biomass lying on the ground in forest and other wooded land. **Unit:** m^3/ha. **Methodology:** as developed and used by FOREST EUROPE, *State of Europe's Forests 2020*, FOREST EUROPE 2020, and in the description of national forest inventories in *Tomppo E. et al.*, National Forest Inventories, *Pathways for Common Reporting*, Springer, 2010, and taking into account the methodology as set out in Annex V to Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 in accordance with the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories.
Share of forests with uneven-aged structure	**Description:** This indicator refers to the share of forests available for wood supply (FAWS) with uneven-aged structure in forests as compared to even-aged structure in forests. **Unit:** Percent of FAWS with uneven-aged structure. **Methodology:** as developed and used by FOREST EUROPE, *State of Europe's Forests 2020*, FOREST EUROPE 2020, and in the description of national forest inventories in *Tomppo E. et al.*, National Forest Inventories, *Pathways for Common Reporting*, Springer, 2010.
Forest connectivity	**Description:** Forest connectivity is the degree of compactness of forest covered areas. It is defined in the range of 0 to 100. **Unit:** Index. **Methodology:** as developed by FAO, Vogt P., et al., *FAO – State of the World's Forests: Forest Fragmentation*, JRC Technical Report, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019.

Forest ecosystems targets: indicators: Annex VI

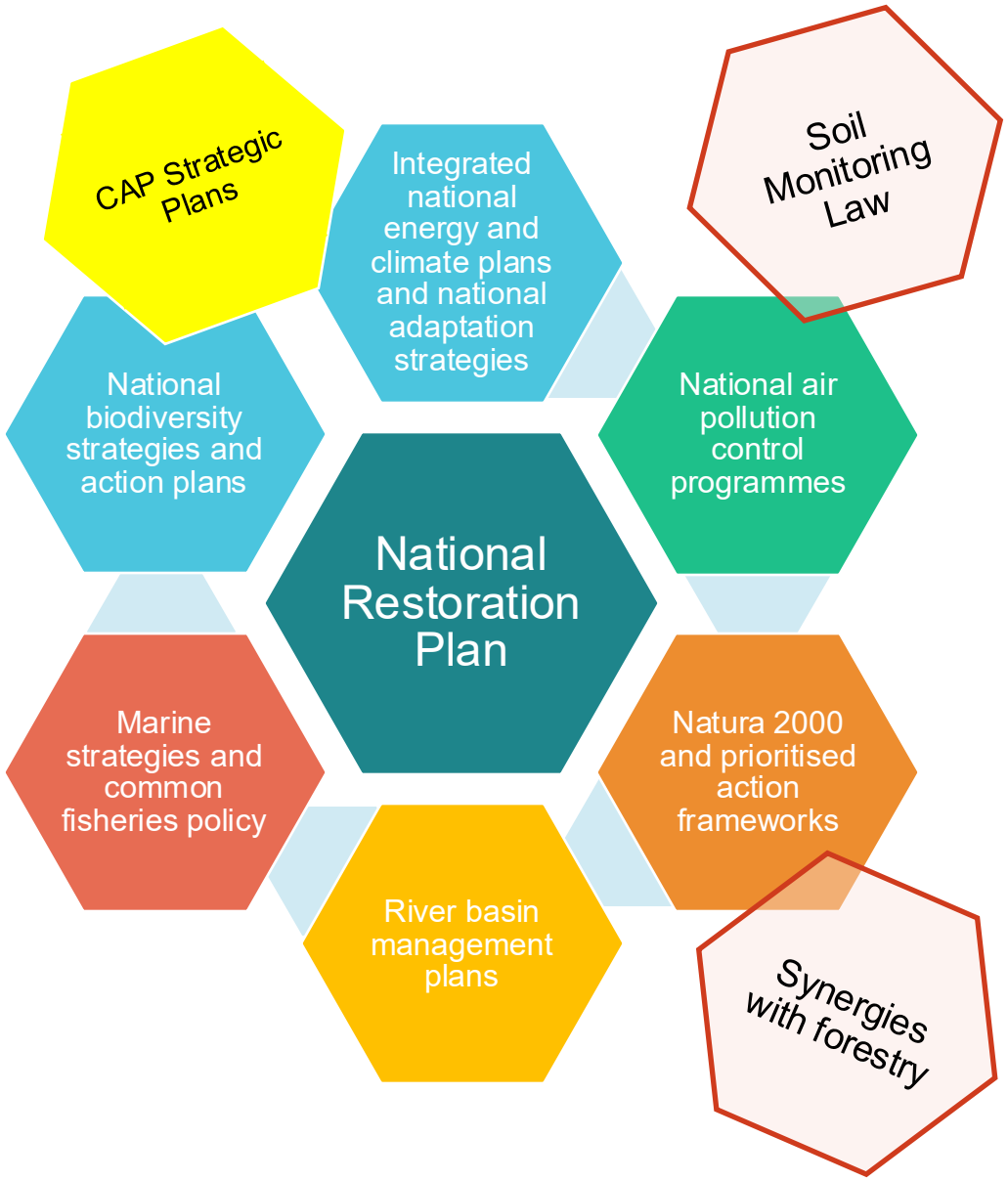
Indicator	Description, units, and methodology for determining and monitoring the indicator
Common forest birds index	**Description:** The forest bird indicator describes trends in the abundance of common forest birds across their European ranges over time. It is a composite index created from observational data of bird species characteristic for forest habitats in Europe. The index is based on a specific list of species in each Member State. **Unit:** Index. **Methodology:** Brlík et al. *Long-term and large-scale multispecies dataset tracking population changes of common European breeding birds*, Sci Data 8, 21. 2021.
Stock of organic carbon	**Description:** This indicator describes the stock of organic carbon in the litter and in the mineral soil at a depth of 0 to 30 cm in forest ecosystems. **Unit:** Tonnes organic carbon/ha. **Methodology:** as set out in Annex V to Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 in accordance with the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, and as supported by the Land Use and Coverage Area frame Survey (LUCAS) Soil, Jones A. et al., *LUCAS Soil 2022*, JRC technical report, Publications Office of the European Union, 2021.
Share of forest dominated by native tree species	**Description:** Share of forest and other wooded land dominated by (>50 % coverage) native tree species. **Unit:** Percent. **Methodology:** as developed and used by FOREST EUROPE, *State of Europe's Forests 2020*, FOREST EUROPE 2020, and in the description of national forest inventories in *Tomppo E. et al.*, National Forest Inventories, *Pathways for Common Reporting*, Springer, 2010.
Tree species diversity	**Description:** This indicator describes the mean number of tree species occurring in forest areas. **Unit:** Index. **Methodology:** Based on FOREST EUROPE, *State of Europe's Forests 2020*, FOREST EUROPE 2020, and in the description of national forest inventories in *Tomppo E. et al.*, National Forest Inventories, *Pathways for Common Reporting*, Springer, 2010.

Planting 3 billion additional trees (Art. 13)

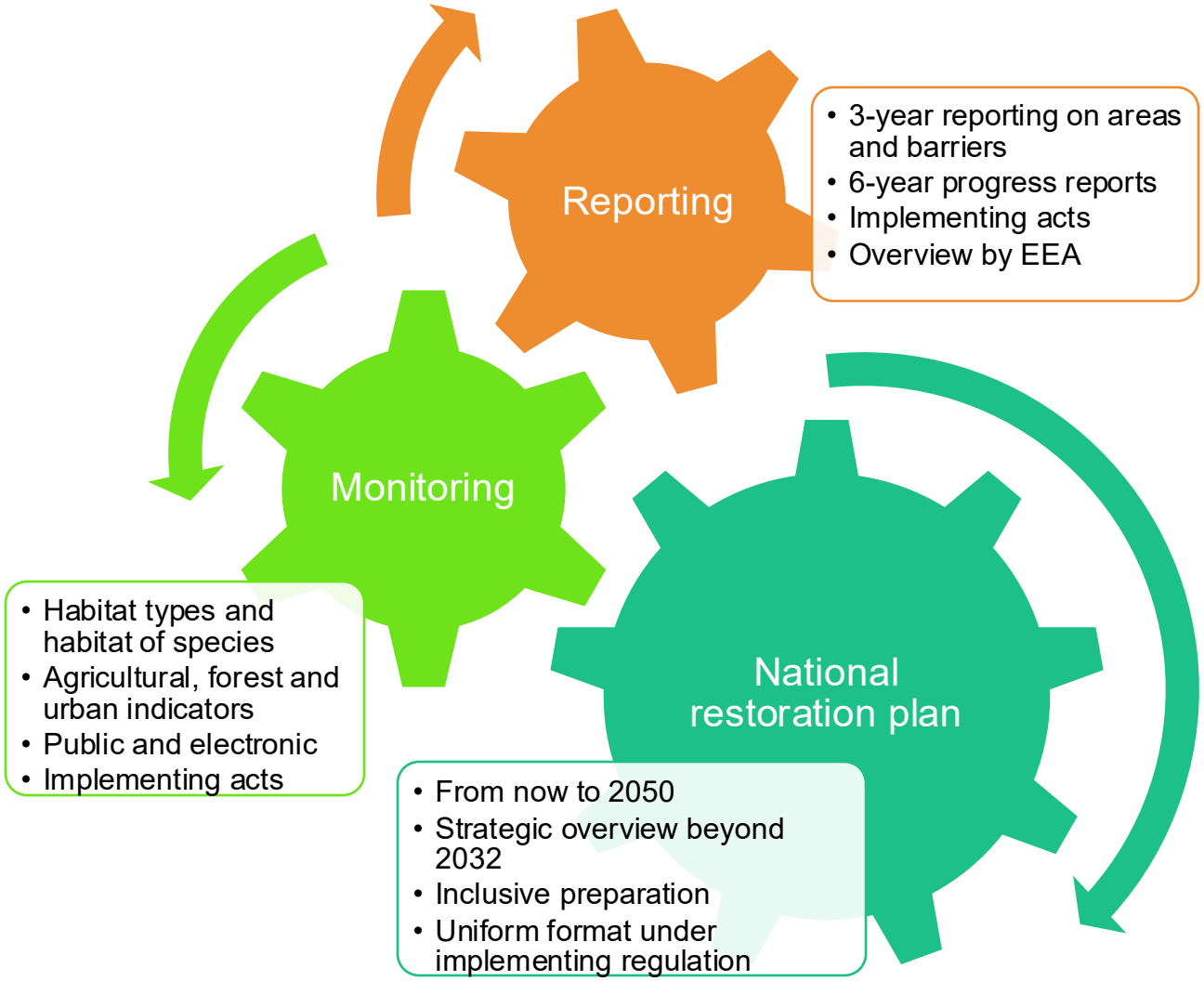
- When implementing the restoration measures above, Member States must aim to contribute to the commitment of planting at least three billion additional trees by 2030 at Union level;
- in full respect of ecological principles, including
  - ensuring species and age structure diversity,
  - prioritising native tree species*
  - increasing ecological connectivity
  - be based on sustainable afforestation, reforestation and tree planting and the greening of urban areas.

*except for, in very specific cases and conditions, non-native species adapted to the local soil, climatic and ecological context and habitat conditions that play a role in fostering increased resilience to climate change.

NRR integrated implementation tools



NRR integrated implementation tools



General overview of NRR deliverables

NRR deliverables (selection)	Legal basis in NRR	Legal form	Deadline or publication
Guidance on a monitoring framework for high-diversity landscape features	Art. 14(7)	Commission notice C/2025/980	Published on 14/02/2025
Uniform format for National Restoration Plans	Art. 15(7)	Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/912	Published on 20 May 2025
Method for monitoring pollinator diversity	Art. 10(2)	Delegated Act	Adopted on 19 September 2025 (scrutiny period ends 20/11)
Nature restoration financing report	Art. 21(7)	Commission Report	In preparation
Reporting formats	Art. 21(3)	Implementing Act	No deadlines
Guiding framework for satisfactory levels for urban, pollinator, agricultural, **possibly for forest indicators**	Art. 20(10) Art. 20(11)(c)	Implementing Act	31/12/2028
Methods for monitoring agricultural indicators listed in Annex IV and **forest indicators** listed in Annex VI ("may")	Art. 20(11)(a) and (b)	Implementing Act	No deadlines
Temporary suspension (relevant provisions Article 11)	Art. 27(1)	Implementing Act	Conditional (exceptional circumstances)

Preparation and content of NRPs

- **Long term planning** exercise: NRP to cover the period up to 2050
- MS can opt for a **strategic overview**: focus on basic information for the period after 2032 in the first plan (2026/27) and for after 2042 in the second plan (2032)
- **Identify necessary restoration measures**: NRR leaves flexibility to MS on how and where to restore; need to be set out by MS in the NRPs
- Take into account **regional diversity**
- Identify **synergies** with other policies and plans (CAP, NEPCs, CFP etc) and existing **agricultural and forestry practices, including CAP interventions,** that contribute to the objectives of NRR
- Indicate **financing** needs, support to affected stakeholders, means of intended financing
- Ensure **open and inclusive** preparation process

Timeline and some provisions for NRPs

Timeline for NRPs	
May 2025	Publication of uniform format for NRPs
By 1 Sept 2026	Submission of draft NRPs by MS
Within 6 months of receipt (~ March 2027)	Assessment + observations by the Commission of draft NRPs
Within 6 months of observations (~ Sept 2027)	NRP finalisation and submission to COM
2032, 2042 and then at least once every 10 years	Revised NRPs

Art 14(6): Member States shall identify and map the agricultural and **forest areas in need of restoration**, in particular the areas that, due to intensification or other management factors, are in need of enhanced connectivity and landscape diversity

Art. 14(10): Member States shall identify synergies with agriculture and **forestry**. They shall also identify existing agricultural and **forestry practices**, including CAP interventions, that contribute to the objectives of this Regulation

Art 14(20): Member States shall ensure that the preparation of the restoration plan is **open, transparent, inclusive** and effective and that the public, **including all relevant stakeholders**, is given early and effective opportunities to participate in its preparation.

How to finance EU nature restoration

Investments rather than costs

- Impact assessment of the Nature Restoration Law
  - Benefits by far outweigh the costs
  - Every €1 spent on restoration ➔ return on investment of €8 on average and up to €38
  - Invest needs: €6-8 billion/year

Toward a renewed support to restoration

- Nature Restoration Regulation
  - Article 14(12): deployment of private or public support schemes to the benefit of stakeholders
  - Article 21(7): financial report on resources, needs, gaps, proposals for adequate measures

EU funds available under current EU budget

- LIFE programme
- European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Agricultural Guarantee fund (EAGF)
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- Cohesion Fund
- Horizon Europe
- Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)
- InvestEU

National funds

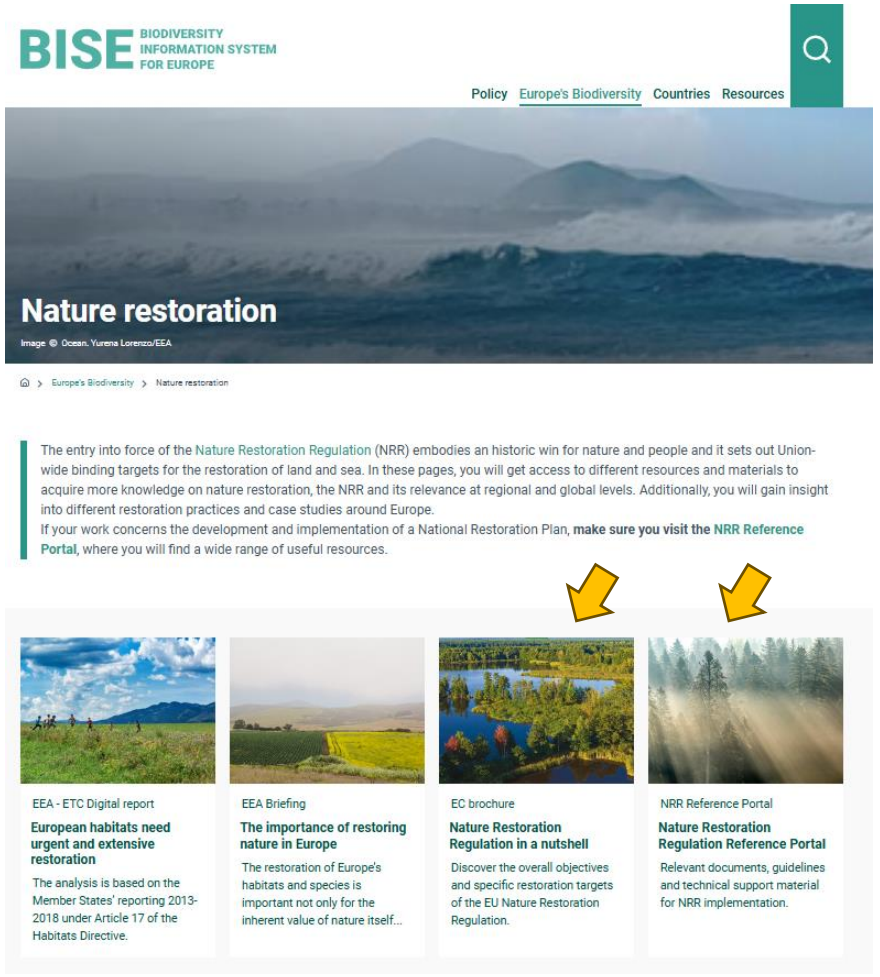
- National budget
- State aid schemes

Public/private investment mechanisms

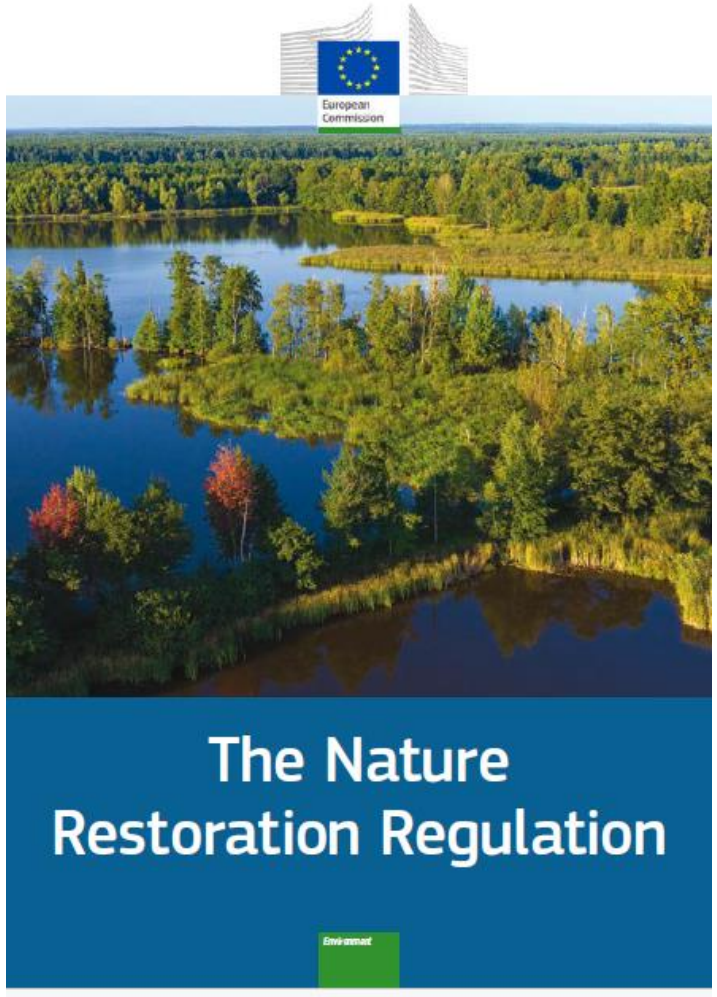
- EU Taxonomy for sustainable finance
  - Environmental protection and restoration activities (europa.eu)
  - Forestry (europa.eu)
- Private sector investment
- Public-private partnerships

Information/Communication

https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-regulation_en



https://biodiversity.europa.eu/europes-biodiversity/nature-restoration



Thank you

For more information: env-biodiversity@ec.europa.eu