

# Water Resilience as a Competitive Edge: Bridging R&I Gaps for Nature-based Solutions (NbS)

Charlemagne Building, 170, rue de la Loi, Brussels  
Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 09:00 – 12:45 CET



## Registration

08:30 – 09:00

## Introduction

09:00 – 09:10

### Welcome from DG RTD

Water resilience and competitiveness: Two interdependent sides of the same medal

- Speaker: James Morrisson, Director of Healthy Planet, DG RTD

## Existing Solutions

09:10 – 09:40

### Setting the scene

Examples of successful water related NbS solutions from Horizon Europe Projects

- ARSINOE: **Chrysi Laspidou**
- RESTCOAST and SpongeScapes: **Ase Johannessen**
- WATERLANDS: **Rolf Hogan**

In an era of climate uncertainty, water resilience is no longer just an environmental priority – it's a strategic advantage. Horizon Europe projects have demonstrated that Nature-based Solutions (NbS) can transform landscapes, boost biodiversity, and create economic value. Flagship restoration projects prove that NbS can deliver tangible benefits – from climate adaptation to green business opportunities, illustrating that e.g. large-scale wetland restoration is both a competitive edge and good for the planet. By taking inspiration from successful examples, stakeholders like policymakers, private investors and businesses working together can turn proven existing NbS into a widespread reality. This will help unlock the full economic and environmental potential of water resilience R&I results.

## Audience Q&A

9:40 – 9:50

## Boosting deployment and investments in nature-based solutions (incl. potential barriers and bottlenecks)

09:50 – 10:50

**Impact talks: R&I Gaps and opportunities**

Pitches from water-related NbS users:

- Agriculture: **Wouter van Eck** – from Agroforestry to Water Resilience innovation
- WRAP: **Alex Fernández Poulussen**, Good stuff international – Collective water resilience action in Southern Spain
- Insurance: **Olivier Bouc**, CCR – Insurance backed prevention
- Research and Scale-Up: **Roel Meulepas**, WETSUS
- Best practice: **Kieran Dartée**, FieldFactors – Successful investment journey
- Landscape- & urban planning: **Reinero Brandon**, Dpt. for Environment – Cabildo de Gran Canaria – Actions for Water Resilience in the Canary Islands

## Audience Q&A

10:50 – 11:00

## Coffee Break

11:00 – 11:30

## An ocean and water research & innovation strategy is key for paving the way forward

11:30– 12:30

**Stakeholder debate: Closing the Gaps – Moderated by Bertrand Vallet**, European Commission – DG RTD

State of play of the water resilience research and innovation strategy by DG RTD Unit B4, followed by a moderated discussion with the audience (incl. polling via Slido):

- What's missing in EU R&I funding for water NbS?
- How can private sector profit from deploying NbS?
- What R&I gap, if closed, would unlock private capital?

## **Plenary Wrap-Up**

12:30 – 12:40

**Rapid fire takeaways with the audience**

## **Closing Remarks**

12:40 – 12:45

**DG RTD B4: Next steps for the strategy**

- **Speaker: Rolf-Jan Hovee**, European Commission – DG RTD

## **Optional: Networking Lunch**

12:45 –

**Charlemagne Cafeteria**