

Event 3

Nature's New Economy: Financing Agricultural Biodiversity for People and Planet

A symposium exploring the instruments, opportunities, and barriers for financing nature-friendly food systems, connecting researchers, practitioners, businesses, and citizens in an open public dialogue.

Date	Tuesday, 23 June 2026
Time	09:30 - 14:00
Venue	Leuven, Belgium
Format	Symposium: presentations, knowledge-sharing, open dialogue, networking lunch
Language	English
Admission	Free and open to all; pre-registration required
Organised by	Multifunctional Landscape Science Program, CGIAR City of Leuven
Partners	EIT Food, Impact House, Leuven MindGate, Leuven 2030, LadyAgri, Beyond Chocolate, KU Leuven, IFAD, BIO-invest, and EIT Food

About This Event

Investing in nature means directing resources, time, knowledge, skills, and funding towards protecting, restoring, and better managing the natural systems that people and economies depend on. This symposium asks how that investment can be made in practice across food systems: what instruments and opportunities exist, what rewards they generate for people and business, and what it would take to scale them across Europe.

Organised by the CGIAR Multifunctional Landscapes Science Programme with City of Leuven as a co-organiser, and partnered with Division of Crop Biotechnics/Leuven Plant Institute, KU Leuven, EIT Food, Impact House, Leuven MindGate, Leuven 2030, and LadyAgri, this half-day event brings together researchers, practitioners, businesses, policymakers, and citizens to explore how agricultural biodiversity, the diversity of our crops, soils, and farming systems, can be recognised, valued, and financed as an investment in nature.

Lulseged Tamene Desta, Director of the CGIAR Multifunctional Landscapes Science Programme, will open with the scientific case for valuing multifunctional landscapes, framing the 2025–2030 portfolio as the evidence base for nature-positive investment. Carlo Fadda, Director of Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture at the Alliance, will serve as facilitator and panellist, connecting financial levers to agrobiodiversity metrics and landscape multifunctionality. Topics include the EU Deforestation Regulation and sustainable supply chains, international and private financing instruments for biodiversity, the Leuven Climate City Contract as a local financial roadmap, food sovereignty and inclusive finance, and seed systems and community resilience.

Objectives

- Present the evidence base for investing in agricultural biodiversity as a nature-positive strategy, drawing on the CGIAR Multifunctional Landscapes Science Programme's 2025–2030 portfolio and global research.

- Examine what financial instruments, public, blended, and private, currently exist for nature investment in food systems, and where the gaps are.
- Explore the role of EU development cooperation in financing nature-positive approaches in the Global South.
- Create a genuinely open public dialogue on what it would take to finance nature at scale across Europe.
- Contribute to the EU Green Week 2026 theme: investing in nature, rewarding for people and business.

Agenda

09:00	Registration and coffee.
09:30	Welcome: CGIAR Multifunctional Landscapes Science Programme, and City of Leuven
09:40	Opening keynote: 'The scientific case for investing in multifunctional landscapes.' Lulseged Tamene Desta, Director, CGIAR Multifunctional Landscapes Science Programme, framing the 2025–2030 portfolio as the evidence base for valuing nature-positive food systems (virtual, pending confirmation).
10:00	Presentation: 'The business case - nature-positive value chains in banana, cocoa, and agroforestry.' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beyond Chocolate and • LadyAgri • Carlo Fadda (CGIAR MFL SP / Alliance).
10:30	Presentation: 'EU development cooperation and financing nature-positive approaches in the Global South.' DG IntPa.
10:50	Financial instruments dialogue: 'Comparing international and private capital for biodiversity.' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guggi Laryea, IFAD, • Joris Totté or representative, BIO-invest, • Leuven MindGate or Impact House, and • KBC Kick-Start. • EIT Food <p>Followed by Leuven 2030 representative presenting the Leuven Climate City Contract as a financial roadmap for nature-positive urban transitions.</p>
11:40	Open dialogue: 'What instruments exist, what gaps remain, and what would it take to finance nature across Europe?' <p>Facilitated by Carlo Fadda (CGIAR MFL SP / Alliance).</p>
12:20	Networking lunch with agrodiverse food showcase.
14:00	Close.

Speakers and Partners

Confirmed Speakers

- Carlo Fadda, Director of Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT (CGIAR MFL SP) - dialogue facilitator and panellist, connecting financial levers to agrobiodiversity metrics and landscape multifunctionality.
- Lulseged Tamene Desta, Director, CGIAR Multifunctional Landscapes Science Programme - opening keynote framing the 2025–2030 science portfolio as the evidence base for investing in multifunctional landscapes.
- Beyond Chocolate and LadyAgri representatives and Carlo Fadda (CGIAR MFL SP / Alliance) - nature-positive cocoa and banana value chains and the business case for agricultural biodiversity.
- Guggi Laryea, IFAD, and Joris Totté, BIO-invest - comparing international financial instruments with private impact capital for biodiversity in the Global South.

Partner Organisations

- DG IntPa representative - EU development cooperation and financing nature-positive approaches in the Global South.
- Leuven 2030 representative - presenting the Leuven Climate City Contract as a financial roadmap for nature-positive urban transitions.
- EIT Food - food innovation and nature-positive approaches; co-organiser.
- Impact House - financing instruments for nature; co-organiser.
- Leuven MindGate - innovation ecosystem; co-organiser.
- Leuven 2030 - urban climate finance and the Leuven Climate City Contract.
- IFAD and BIO-invest - international and private financial instruments for biodiversity.
- LadyAgri - impact investment in agricultural biodiversity.
- Beyond Chocolate - sustainable cocoa and deforestation-free value chains.
- KU Leuven - agrobiodiversity, soil science, and food systems expertise.
- City of Leuven – local host and local policy and governance perspective

Planning Note

This event contributes to the EU Green Week 2026 theme of investing in nature, rewarding for people and business, and aligns with the following Green Week themes: Sustainable finance, Green economy, Biodiversity, Sustainable agriculture, Innovation, Bioeconomy, and Nature-based solutions.