



Concept Note EU Green Week

Investing in Nature: Mobilising Private Sector Engagement to Deliver Global Commitments *Wetland Partnerships for Impact*

When: 3 or 4 June 2026

Where: Thon Hotel EU, rue de la loi, 75 Brussels (TBC)

Web description

Wetlands are essential for climate resilience, biodiversity, and water security, but also for economic development. They support livelihoods, reduce disaster risks, and secure water resources for key sectors. Yet they continue to be degraded, both in Europe and globally, undermining progress towards EU environmental objectives and international commitments. Strengthening the external dimension of EU environmental policy, and linking it more clearly to socio-economic outcomes, is therefore critical.

This session will take a different approach from traditional policy discussions by focusing on real-world experiences. It will showcase concrete examples involving private sector support, including how wetlands contribute to risk management, water security, supply chain resilience, and long-term value creation.

To strengthen the international dimension, the session will also feature a representative from a non-EU country engaged in a global voluntary initiative such as the Freshwater Challenge, the Mangrove Breakthrough or the Peatland Breakthrough. This will highlight why investing in wetlands is a priority from an economic and development perspective.

The session will also explore how EU engagement can support these efforts, with a focus on EU Wetland Partnerships as a tool to connect policy, finance and implementation in partner countries, including under the Global Gateway and in support of the EU Water Resilience Strategy.

The session will take the form of an interactive panel (75 – 90 minutes) with audience discussion, targeting EU institutions, private sector actors, investors and practitioners.

Background

Wetlands are essential for climate resilience, biodiversity and water security, but also for economic development. They underpin livelihoods, reduce disaster risks and support key sectors such as agriculture, energy and industry. Despite their value, wetlands continue to be degraded at an alarming rate, both within Europe and globally.

At the same time, the EU has committed to ambitious environmental objectives under the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the EU Water Resilience Strategy, alongside global commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Global Biodiversity Framework. Delivering on these commitments requires a significant scale-up of investment, particularly in partner countries, where needs and opportunities are greatest.



Public funding alone will not be sufficient. Increasingly, private sector actors are recognising wetlands as strategic assets for managing risks, securing supply chains and creating long-term value. However, investment remains limited due to a lack of structured opportunities, perceived risks and fragmented approaches.

Global voluntary initiatives such as the Freshwater Challenge, Mangrove Breakthrough, and the Peatland Breakthrough are helping to build momentum and frame ambition. Yet there is still a need to translate these into concrete, investable projects and stronger partnerships.

In this context, EU Wetland Partnerships can provide a practical mechanism to connect EU policy priorities with implementation on the ground, supporting the external dimension of EU environmental policy and enabling a more integrated approach to water, biodiversity and climate.

Objective of the Session

This session aims to move the discussion from commitments to action by focusing on the role of the private sector. It will:

- Showcase private sector experiences in investing in wetlands;
- Highlight the socio-economic value of healthy wetlands in partner countries;
- Explore how global initiatives can translate into investment opportunities;
- Identify barriers and enabling conditions for scaling private finance; and
- Position EU Wetland Partnerships as a tool to connect policy, finance and implementation

Key Questions

The discussion will be guided by some core questions:

- Why are private sector actors investing in wetlands, and what value do they see?
- How do wetlands contribute to economic development, resilience and risk reduction?
- What are the main barriers to scaling investment, and how can they be addressed?
- How can global initiatives (Freshwater Challenge, Mangrove Breakthrough and Peatland Breakthrough) support and strengthen investment pipelines?
- What role can the EU play in making this easier and more scalable?

Format: Interactive discussion (by invitation only)

The event will bring together a targeted group of stakeholders to enable an open and focused exchange.

Opening remarks (EU policy context and international dimension)

- **Private sector interventions** (concrete investment experiences and lessons learned)
- **Partner country perspective** from a non-EU State engaged in one of the three global initiatives, highlighting the economic value of wetlands and their role in development
- **Discussion** on scaling investment and the role of partnerships, including audience exchange

Speakers (indicative)

The panel will aim for a balanced mix of perspectives, including:

- European Commission representatives (e.g. DG ENV, DG INTPA, DG CLIMA)
- Private sector actors (companies, financial institutions, investors)



- Representatives of global initiatives (Mangrove Breakthrough, Freshwater Challenge, Peatland Breakthrough)
- Implementation partners (e.g. NGOs and international organisations)

Expected Outcomes

The session should help to:

- Increased understanding of the business and economic case for investing in wetlands
- Stronger link between EU policies and implementation in partner countries
- Identification of practical opportunities to scale private sector engagement
- Enhanced visibility of EU Wetland Partnerships as a delivery tool under Global Gateway

Relevance to EU Green Week 2026

This session contributes to EU Green Week 2026 by focusing on the implementation of EU environmental policies in Europe and beyond, with a strong emphasis on the external dimension. It supports DG ENV priorities by promoting integrated approaches to water, biodiversity and climate, in line with the EU Water Resilience Strategy, and by strengthening partnerships to deliver global commitments.

Organisers

Wetlands International European Association

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