

EUROPARC SIGGEN SEMINAR 2026 Report

**Nature Restoration Plans:
the path towards implementation**

17 to 18 March 2026
Gut Siggen, Germany





This year's Siggen Seminar followed a hybrid format, creating a valuable space to exchange insights and discuss the **EU Nature Restoration Regulation**, challenges and opportunities emerging from the **National Restoration Plans**, and **key priority areas for its effective implementation**.

Nature Restoration Plans: the path towards implementation

Every year Alfred Toepfer Stiftung generously hosts EUROPARC members, in their excellent centre in Gut Siggen, North Germany. Here, we take the opportunity to hold an intense and practically orientated seminar, examining and sharing expertise in a given aspect of Protected Areas' work. You can find previous Siggen Seminars [here](#).

In 2026, the seminar focused on the recently adopted EU Nature Restoration Regulation (EU NRR) and looked at **how Member States are developing their Nature Restoration Plans**, specially looking at **its future implementation**.



Goal

The main objective of the Siggen Seminar 2026 was to foster the **exchange of experiences** between leading restoration experts in the planning and implementation of the Nature Restoration Plans under the EU NRR, and to **identify critical steps and knowledge gaps** required to move from nature restoration planning to effective implementation

As outputs, EUROPARC aims to develop the **curriculum for a new training course**, as a model to be available in the future pending adequate funding, and a dedicated **toolkit will be published in 2026** to support practitioners in their planning to turn restoration plans into action in Protected Areas across Europe.

Seminar dynamics and participation

The seminar was organised in a **hybrid format** and included a mix of in-person and online sessions, targeting **representatives of ministries and state agencies** engaged in the development of National Nature Restoration Plans.

Furthermore, based on the premise that **Protected Areas will be key players** in the implementation of the National Nature Restoration Plans due to their close relationship with the management of Natura 2000 sites, **Protected Area managers** and **other stakeholders** involved in the future implementation of these plans were also invited to attend and exchange.

Present at the seminar venue, a small group of experts formed the **core working group**: working closely together, they shared their experience and insights during two dedicated online sessions and collected inputs from the presentations delivered by the online speakers for its further discussion and analysis. The focus areas for discussion were:

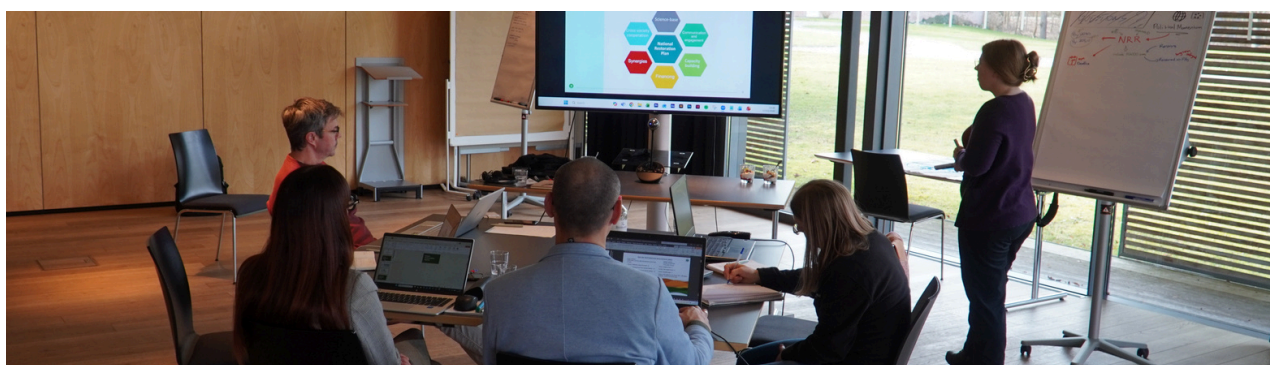


- Policy context of the EU NRR and recommendations.
- Challenges and enablers in the development of National Nature Restoration Plans.
- Considerations for the future implementation of the plans.
- Analysis for identifying key gaps and learning needs to develop a training curriculum and toolkit.

Through different exercises and group dynamics, the participants identified some key aspects to be considered for an effective implementation of the EU NRR, which were complemented with insights from the online sessions. These findings are summarised at the end of this report – see *Focus areas & learning needs*.

Presentations and speakers

A total of nine speakers, plus the facilitator and technical team, participated during the online sessions and a total number of **122** and **80** participants attended the two sessions respectively. A summary of the session, speakers and key conclusions are presented next:



Tuesday 17 March – Nature Restoration Planning

This first online session set the context of the Siggen Seminar 2026 and focused on exchanging practical experiences on the planning and implementation of National Nature Restoration Plans. The session started with highlighting the **urgency of reversing biodiversity loss** and **restoring degraded ecosystems**, and emphasised collaboration, knowledge sharing and the need for developing **robust restoration plans**.

Policy and Nature Restoration: the way forward

By Sofie Ruysschaert - Senior Nature Restoration Policy Officer, Birdlife Europe & Central Asia.

“Restoration must be systemic: it requires cross-sectoral coordination, stable financing, and meaningful engagement with landowners, local communities, and civil society”.

Nature Restoration Plans in Latvia

By Laura Anteina - Director General, Nature Conservation Agency, Latvia.

“Restoration challenges include incomplete datasets, the need for specialized expertise, and tensions between restoration goals and economic land uses such as forestry and agriculture”.

Preparing the National Nature Restoration Plan in Lithuania

By Raimondas Čiuplys - Counselor, State Service for Protected Areas, Lithuania.

“Coordination among ministries, agencies and scientific institutions is essential but often complex, particularly when integrating restoration with forestry, agriculture, and climate policies”.

NaturaConnect: Finding Priority Areas for Restoration in Europe

By Louise O'Connor - Horizon Europe NaturaConnect project.

“Connectivity is key: it ensures that restored areas form functional networks rather than isolated patches”.

Wednesday 18 March – Nature Restoration Implementation

The second online session focused on the **implementation of National Nature Restoration Plans**. It highlighted **the role of Protected Areas** and its insights in the nature restoration process, the **critical role of stakeholders** and the importance of **long-term partnerships**. The session concluded by stressing the need for and **importance of capacity-building initiatives**.

Implementing the Nature Restoration Regulation: Insights, Opportunities and Implications for Protected Areas.

By Gábor Figeczky - Senior Programme Manager, Restoration, IUCN.

“Protected Areas are essential anchors for large-scale ecological restoration, but many currently lack the resources and institutional support needed to meet these expectations”.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies & Example of a Restoration Action.

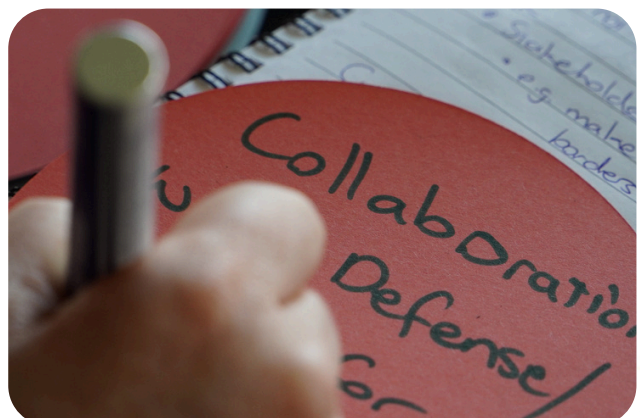
By Katherine Hawkins - Nature Policy Manager, The Wildlife Trusts, United Kingdom.

“Successful restoration depends on long-term partnerships, adaptive management, and a shared vision for nature recovery at the landscape scale”.

Ecosystem Restoration: Challenges and Solutions

By Mira Franzen - Specialist for Natural Climate Protection, National Natural Landscapes (NNL), Germany.

“Co-creation with local communities, adaptive management and robust monitoring frameworks that track ecological outcomes over time are key to success”.



Grasslands Restoration in France

By Agathe Benoit-Cattin - Head of Grasslands Programme, Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux, France, & Clara Fontana – Head of Coopération Internationale, Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux, France.

“Collaboration with farmers is crucial, as many restoration actions depend on agricultural practices”.

The European Nature Academy

By Neil McIntosh - Head of Communication & Capacity Building, Project Manager LIFE PAME-Europe, EUROPARC Federation.

“A critical gap: many institutions lack the technical and managerial skills needed to plan, implement, and monitor restoration at scale”.

The recordings of the online sessions are available on EUROPARC's YouTube channel:

- ▶ [17 March – Nature Restoration Planning - session recording.](#)
- ▶ [18 March – Nature Restoration Implementation - session recording.](#)

Conclusions and recommendations

From the discussion and takeaways collected during the on-site and online sessions, the following conclusions are drawn:

- 1. Restoration requires strong governance, cross-sector coordination, and political will to work:** it is systemic and depends on coherent governance across sectors - ministries, agencies, Protected Area managers, landowners, a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities, political will and coherent governance structures as well as capacity building to fill skill gaps.
- 2. Restoration must align with broader policy frameworks and requires legal clarity:** this starts with understanding legislation and policy frameworks (CAP, climate, water, land-use, forestry,...) and how they interact, and by clarifying the role of Protected Areas and Natura 2000 sites.
- 3. Data quality, baselines, habitat assessments, and evidence-based planning are the backbone of restoration:** there is a need for robust data, mapping, and condition assessments in order to set restoration baselines, cover data gaps and prioritise restoration areas strategically.

4. Monitoring and adaptive management are necessary for accountability and long-term success: this is especially relevant in the need to develop consolidated monitoring schemes at national/ EU level, differentiating action monitoring (short-term) vs. outcome monitoring (long-term) and using monitoring to adapt and improve restoration actions (adaptive management).

5. Stakeholder engagement, conflict resolution and co-creation are critical for the acceptance of restoration measures on the ground: addressing land use conflicts is a cross-cutting challenge, as well as engaging landowners, farmers, and communities and building trust and long-term stewardship.

6. Communication skills and tools for engagement underpin engagement and governance: clear communication of restoration goals, its speculative outcomes and long timelines should be conveyed with appropriate guidance, templates, and materials to streamline communications.



7. Long-term financing and stable funding mechanisms are indispensable: this includes the provision of public incentives and EU/ national funding streams, unlocking private financing (grants, loans, blended finance,...) and designing incentives for landowners and businesses as well as strategies for long-term financing.

8. Capacity building is a clear need and priority for implementation: technical, administrative, and managerial capacity gaps are major challenges to overcome, emphasising the need for structured training programmes, peer learning and shared resources.

9. Connectivity and landscape-scale planning are essential for ecological success: by understanding connectivity principles and by planning restoration actions at landscape scale we must create functional ecological networks, not isolated sites. The NaturaConnect project is creating a range of tools to support these processes.

10. Knowledge exchange and shared learning spaces can accelerate restoration: countries face similar challenges and benefit from shared solutions through platforms for exchanging experiences between Member States, thematic communities of practice, shared resources, templates and methodologies.

Final considerations and next steps

The Siggen Seminar 2026 has been a great occasion to start a joint discussion involving different actors engaged, or to be in engaged in the future, in the design and implementation of the National Nature Restoration Plans.

This event enabled EUROPARC to confirm strong interest in the topic and the shared need, across both Member States and individual professionals, to exchange on existing approaches, challenges, and solutions related to restoration initiatives.

Furthermore, thanks to the experiences shared by the many participants, we hope to have established a solid common ground on the diverse approaches that Member States are taking to implement the EU NRR.

Based on the insights and conclusions obtained from the Siggen Seminar, during 2026, EUROPARC Federation will work to develop a toolkit, as well as a more comprehensive training curriculum, to be available in the future subject to funding.

With these resources, we aim to respond to the learning needs identified during this seminar and to support Protected Area managers in the future implementation of the nature restoration process in the EU and across.



Beach neighbouring Gut Siggen, Heringsdorf, Germany.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank again all speakers and participants that have made this event possible, with special mention to: Katherine Hawkins, from The Wildlife Trusts, United Kingdom; Laura Anteina, from the Nature Conservation Agency, Latvia; and Raimondas Čiuplys, from the State Service for Protected Areas, Lithuania, for dedicating significant time from their busy agendas to attend in person to Gutt Siggen.

About Siggen Seminars and the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung

Bringing together Protected Area professionals to learn together, share experience and knowledge in various aspects of Protected Area management and innovate new ideas is at the heart of the EUROPARC Federation's work.

Thanks to the generosity of the [Alfred Toepfer Stiftung](#) F.V.S. we have access, annually, to their private seminar centre at Gut Siggen in North Germany, hugging the Baltic Sea coast. Alfred Toepfer Stiftung's founder was also one of the Federation's founders and played an important role in its growth and development. Read the outcomes of previous Siggen Seminars [here](#).

About EUROPARC Federation

The EUROPARC Federation is the largest European network of Protected Area professionals with more than 400 members from 40 countries. Our members are directly or indirectly managing thousands of National and Regional Parks, Marine Protected Areas and Natura 2000 sites. Our organisation is working on different levels to improve the management of Protected Areas in Europe to the benefit of nature and people. www.europarc.org

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