

Alternet Day - 12 June, 2024

Sustainability Research + Innovation Congress 2024 - Sustainability Science Days

Overcoming the bottlenecks for upscaling nature restoration in the EU: the role of the scientific community

Kris Decleer

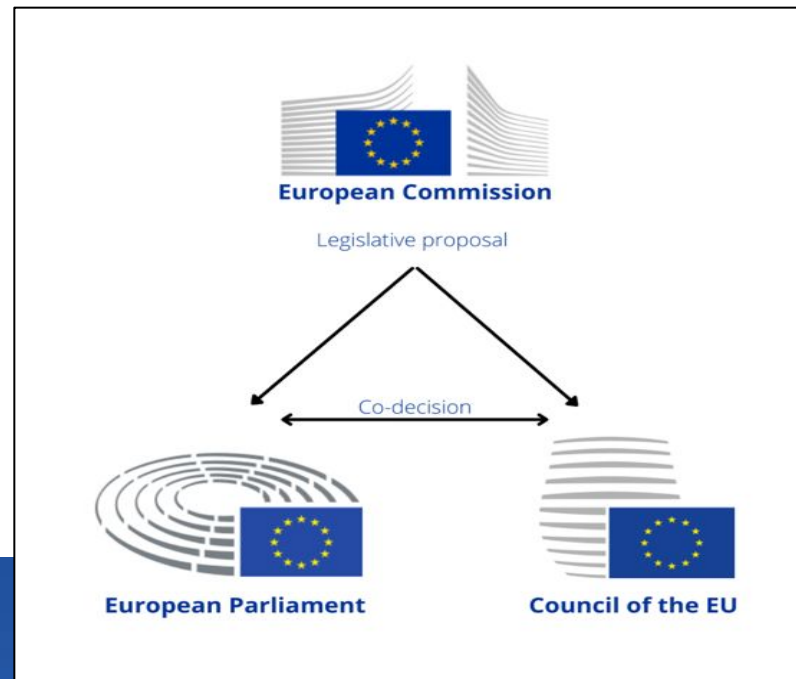
Research Institute for Nature and Forest
Society for ecological restoration Europe

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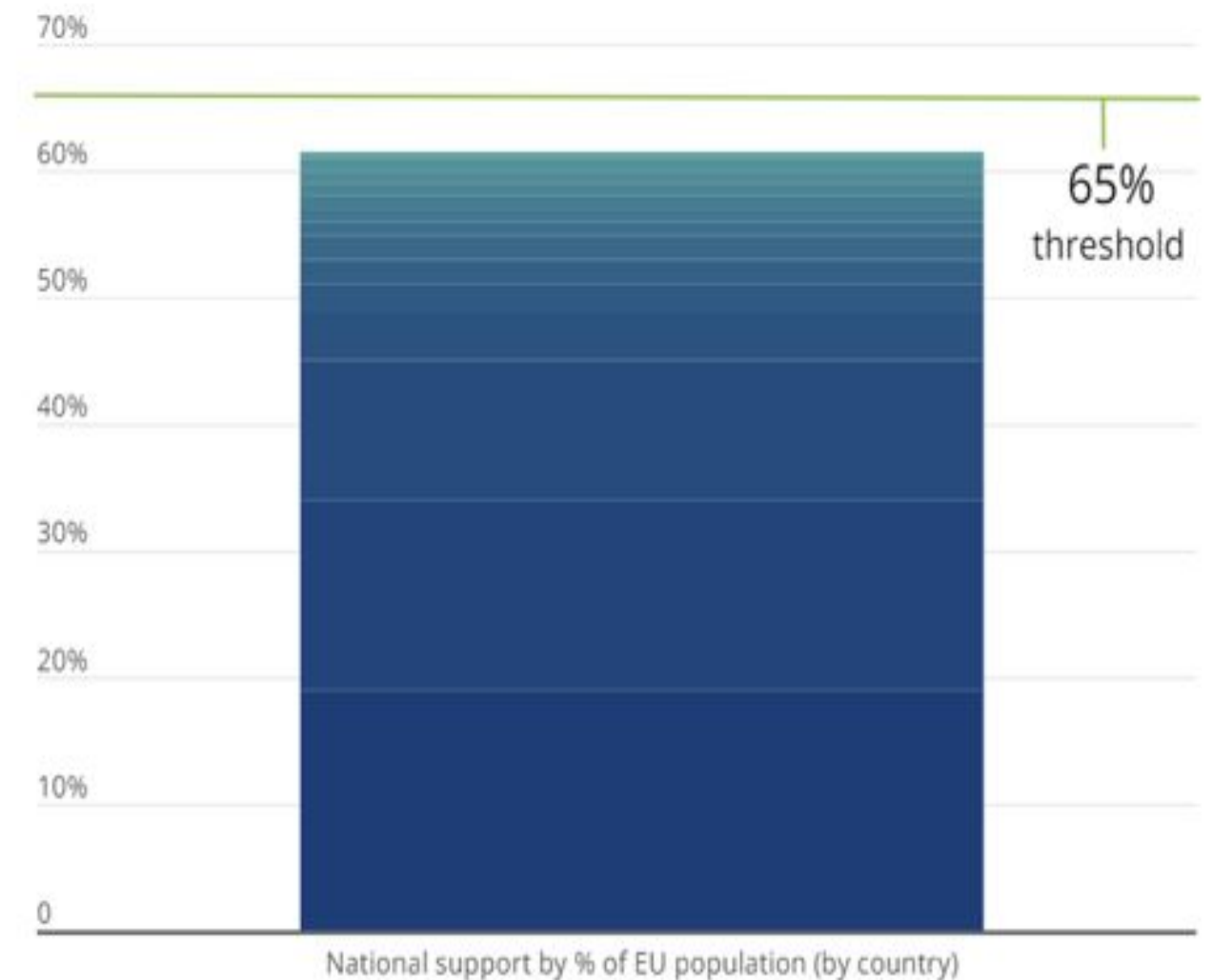
SER
EUROPE
SOCIETY FOR
ECOLOGICAL
RESTORATION



Uncertain outcome of Council vote scheduled for 17 June 2024



Nature restoration law: just short of needed support



Source: European Council voting record - updated to include subsequent position changes

Visual: Esther Snippe



Main bottlenecks (33)

(lack of ecol. knowledge not in the top 10)



RESEARCH ARTICLE | [Full Access](#) |

Barriers to ecological restoration in Europe: expert perspectives

J. Cortina-Segarra✉, I. García-Sánchez, M. Grace✉, P. Andrés✉, S. Baker✉, C. Bullock✉, K. Declerck✉, L.V. Dicks✉, J.L. Fisher✉, J. Frouz✉, A. Klimkowska, A.P. Kyriazopoulos✉... [See all authors](#) ▾

First published: 12 January 2021 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/rec.13346> |

1	Insufficient funding	Financial
2	Conflicting interests of different stakeholders	Social-cultural
3	Low political priority for restoration	Policy and governance
4	Lack of integrated land use planning	Legal and ownership
5	Difficulty in obtaining legal or property rights over the area to implement restoration	Legal and ownership
6	Harmful subsidies favoring degradation	Financial
7	Lack of collaboration between different stakeholders	Social-cultural
8	Lack of evaluation, monitoring and documentation	Management planning, implementation
9	Lack of appropriate compensation and financial returns on restoration	Financial
10	Lack of coordination between decision-makers in different domains and administrative departments	Policy and governance
11	Complexity of the legal framework	Legal and ownership

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10	Lack of coordination between decision-makers in different domains and administrative departments	Policy and governance
11	Complexity of the legal framework	Legal and ownership
12	Unsuitable policies and lack of enabling policy instruments	Policy and governance
13	High level and rate of degradation	Environmental
14	Inadequate implementation of current policies	Policy and governance
15	The timing of restoration projects does not correspond to ecological and social timescales	Management planning, implementation
16	Lack of understanding and collaboration across different aspects of restoration, e.g., ecology, engineering, social sciences, etc.	Social-cultural
17	Constraints due to biotic challenges e.g. concerning species dispersal rates, interspecific interactions, etc.	Environmental
18	Lack of effective knowledge exchange	Social-cultural
19	Lack of motivation in decision-makers to incorporate innovation	Management planning, implementation
20	Lack of prior evaluation, assessment and design	Management planning, implementation
21	Lack of societal awareness and engagement	Social-cultural
22	Lack of involvement of the private sector	Management planning, implementation
23	Lack of relevant ecological knowledge and experience	Management planning, implementation
24	Perceived complexity of implementing restoration	Legal and ownership
25	Constraints due to abiotic characteristics of the area, e.g. climate, topography, water availability	Environmental
26	Unrealistic or unclear project goals	Management planning, implementation
27	Lack of standards against which progress can be measured	Management planning, implementation
28	Lack of quality plant material (including lack of suitable species and genotypes)	Environmental
29	Lack of skilled professionals to perform restoration	Management planning, implementation
30	Lack of knowledge about soils	Management planning, implementation
31	Conflicts between restoration goals, e.g. biodiversity, climate change mitigation, nutrient retention	Environmental
32	Lack of sense of identity, attachment to the landscape	Social-cultural
33	Lack of suitable technology	Management planning, implementation

Some main working points for the scientific community

1. More effective Science Communication



Some main working points

1. More effective Science Communication





Communities

My dashboard

Published July 9, 2023 | Version Full Version 9.7.2023 (preprint)

Preprint

Open

Scientists support the EU's Green Deal and reject the unjustified argumentation against the Sustainable Use Regulation and the Nature Restoration Law

Guy Pe'er¹ ; Jana Kachler² ; Irina Herzon³ ; Daniel Hering⁴ ; Anni Arponen³ ; Laura Bosco⁵ ; Helge Bruelheide⁶ ; Martin Friedrichs-Manthey⁷ ; Gregor Hagedorn⁸ ; Bernd Hansjürgens⁹ ; Emma Ladouceur¹⁰ ; Sebastian Lakner¹¹ ; Camino Liqueste¹² ; Martin Quaas¹³ ; Marine Robuchon¹² ; Deli Saavedra¹⁴ ; Nuria Selva¹⁵ ; Josef Settele¹⁶ ; Clélia Sirami¹⁷ ; Nicole M. van Dam¹⁸ ; Heidi Wittmer¹⁹ ; E.R. Jasper Wubs²⁰ ; Aletta Bonn²¹

Show affiliations

The scientific community is deeply concerned about the ongoing discussions on the EU's Green Deal. Of particular concern are the current criticisms targeting the Sustainable Use Regulation (SUR) and Nature Restoration Law (NRL). We urge policy makers to continue the legislative procedure for the SUR and the NRL, and invite opponents of the Green Deal for a consultation with scientists.

The call was led by 23 scientists and signed by 6000 scientists across EU Member States and 30 additional countries.

Notes

This open letter is accompanied by signatures from 6000 scientists. The document has been adjusted and elaborated in response to comments on the initial versions of 7.6.2023, and two new claims and counter-claims, as well as introduction and discussion, were added.

News > World > View

The EPP Group is wrong. The EU's nature restoration law won't lead to a 'global famine'



By **Olivier De Schutter, Co-Chair**, and **Emile Frison, Panel Expert, IPES-Food** • Updated: 09/06/2023

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not represent in any way the editorial position of Euronews.

It's time politicians abandon these cynical games and tackle the challenges we are facing seriously, Olivier De Schutter and Emile Frison write.

Before walking out of the negotiations on the Nature Restoration Law last week, the EPP parliamentary group shared a rather dramatic list of problems with the European Commission's proposal.

In a series of tweets in the group's social media feed, it was claimed that the proposed law would lead to "increased food prices" and "even a global famine".

As the European Parliament prepares to vote on the law on Thursday, we need a reality check — and an end to scaremongering around NRL and the EU's Farm2Fork strategy.

Growing more food is not the solution to rising hunger

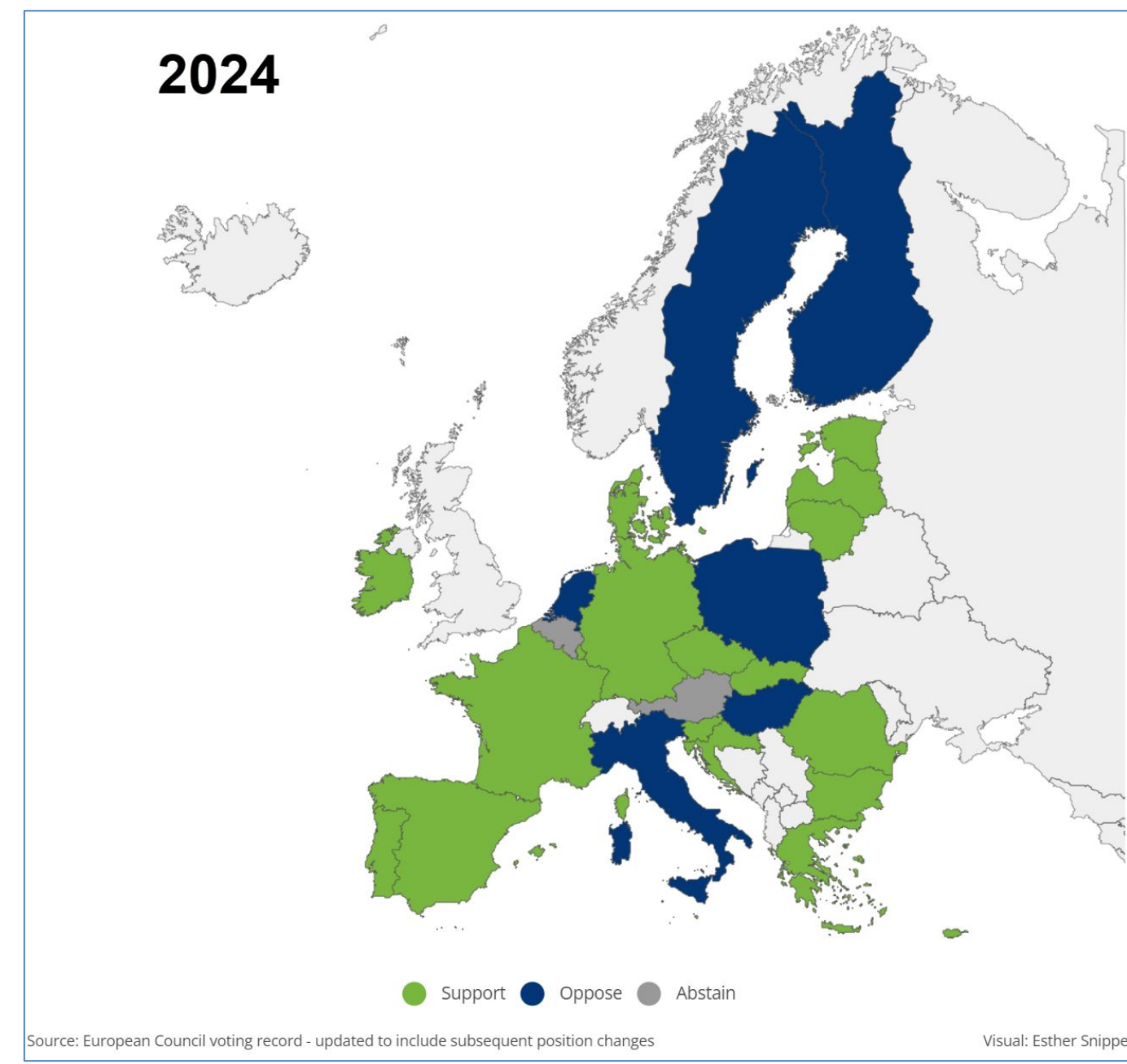
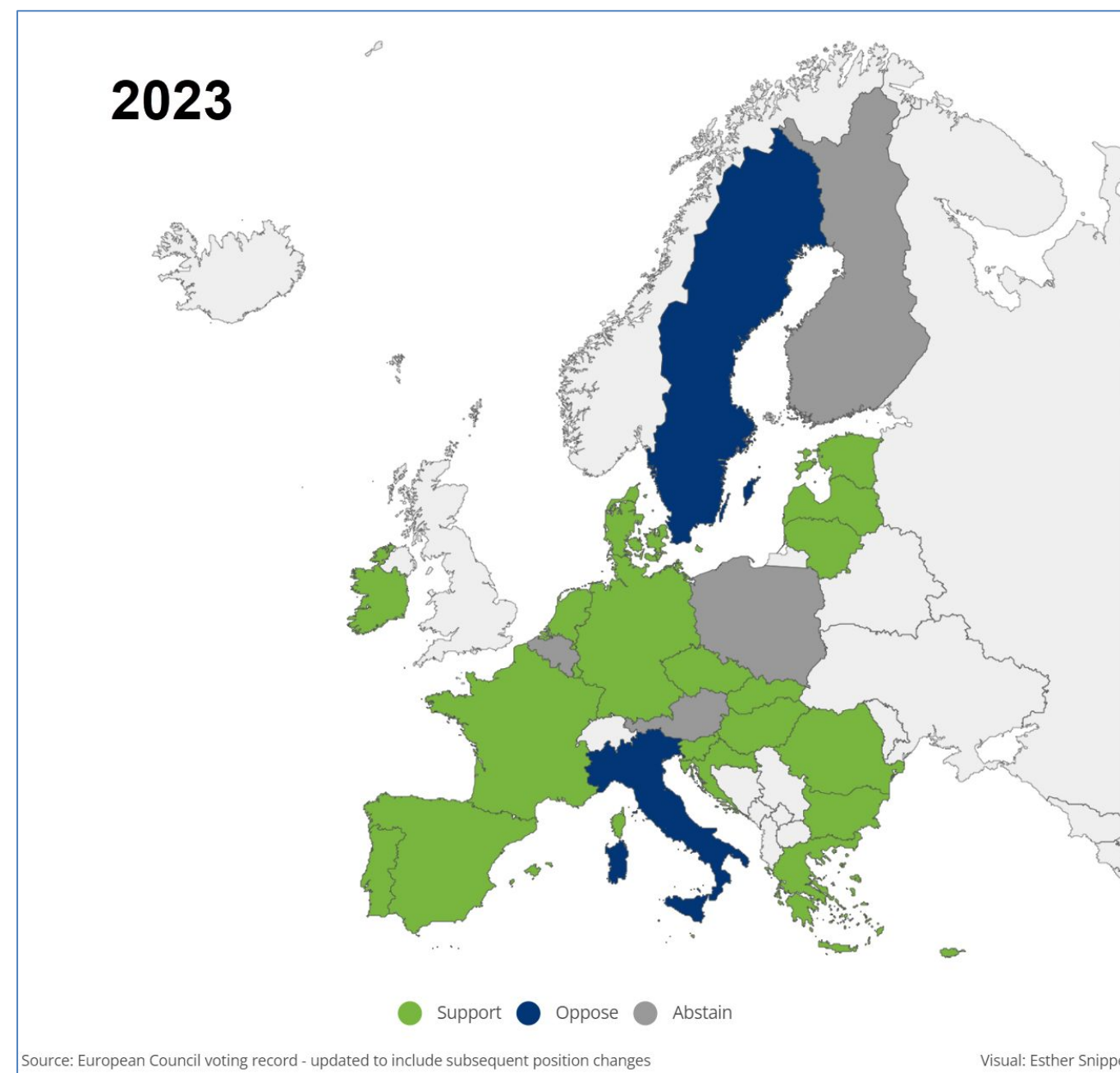
The reality today is that the world already produces more than enough food to feed a growing population, according to UN data.

Indeed for the past two decades, the rate of global food production has increased faster than the rate of population growth.

Main working points

1. More effective Science Communication

National votes on the NRL



Main working points

1. More effective Science Communication



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Conservatives demand withdrawal of nature restoration law

The conservative EPP group has called on the EU executive to withdraw the Nature Restoration Regulation after two associated committees in the European Parliament voted against the proposal.

by Christian Ernhede



FROM POLITICO PRO

Belgian PM wants to hit 'pause' on nature restoration rules

The Commission wants to boost efforts against biodiversity loss. But that's dividing Belgium along familiar lines.



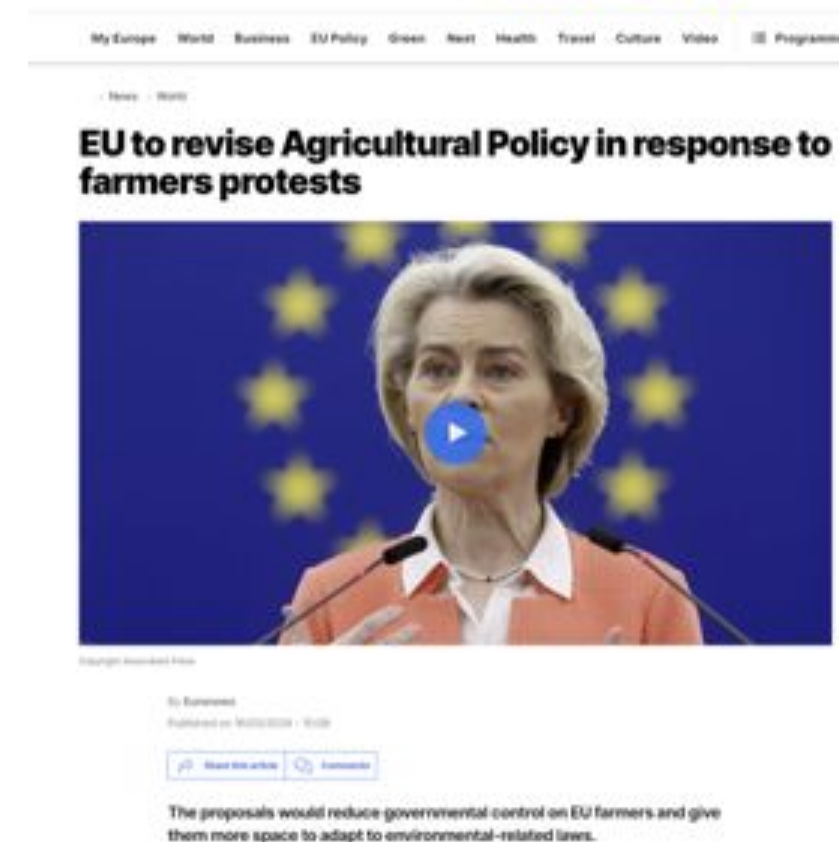
Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander De Croo called for focusing on climate change rather than pushing new green legislation | Pooled photo by Hannah McKay/Getty Images

Main working points

1. More effective Science Communication

Weakening of other environmental legislation at EU-level:

- Delay of measure to set aside 4% of agricultural land for biodiversity
- Removal of Pesticide regulation proposal
- Proposal to revise part of the Common Agricultural Policy (less control, less conditionality, more exceptions)



Main working points

1. More effective Science Communication



The screenshot shows the Zenodo interface for a specific record. At the top is a blue header with the Zenodo logo, a search bar, and links for 'Communities' and 'My dashboard'. Below the header, the record's publication date and version are shown: 'Published June 5, 2024 | Version V2.1 (05.06.2024)'. To the right of this are two buttons: 'Other' and 'Open'. The main title of the record is 'Expression of Concern by Scientific associations: Rollback of EU environmental legislation and policies jeopardises the future of EU citizens (V2)'. Below the title is a list of contributing organizations, each followed by a group icon. 'ALTER-net' is circled in red in the original image. The list includes: Society for Conservation Biology - Europe Region ROR; Scientists for Future; Society for Ecological Restoration - Europe; ALTER-net; GfÖ - Gesellschaft für Ökologie; European Ecological Federation (EEF); Netherlands Ecological Research Network (NERN); EuropeForNature initiative; Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) – European region; Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS); The International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG); Austrian Mycological Society; Austrian Biodiversity Council of the Austrian Biodiversity Network; Hungarian Ecological Society; Czech Society for Ecology; Spanish Association for Terrestrial Ecology; Society for Tropical Ecology; Austrian Zoological-Botanical Society; and Oikos Finland.

zenodo Search records... Communities My dashboard

Published June 5, 2024 | Version V2.1 (05.06.2024) Other Open

Expression of Concern by Scientific associations: Rollback of EU environmental legislation and policies jeopardises the future of EU citizens (V2)

Society for Conservation Biology - Europe Region ROR; Scientists for Future; Society for Ecological Restoration - Europe;
ALTER-net; GfÖ - Gesellschaft für Ökologie; European Ecological Federation (EEF);
Netherlands Ecological Research Network (NERN); EuropeForNature initiative;
Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) – European region; Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS);
The International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG); Austrian Mycological Society;
Austrian Biodiversity Council of the Austrian Biodiversity Network; Hungarian Ecological Society; Czech Society for Ecology;
Spanish Association for Terrestrial Ecology; Society for Tropical Ecology; Austrian Zoological-Botanical Society;
Oikos Finland

<https://zenodo.org/records/11493585>

Main working points

1. More effective Science Communication

- engage communication experts
- more face-to-face talks with politicians?
- more scientists active at the political level?
- more scientists in the news, talk shows, etc.
- media training
- policy training
- ...

Main working points

2. Better Conflict management and Stakeholder participation



- ☐ Best practice guidance needed ~ social scientists

Main working points

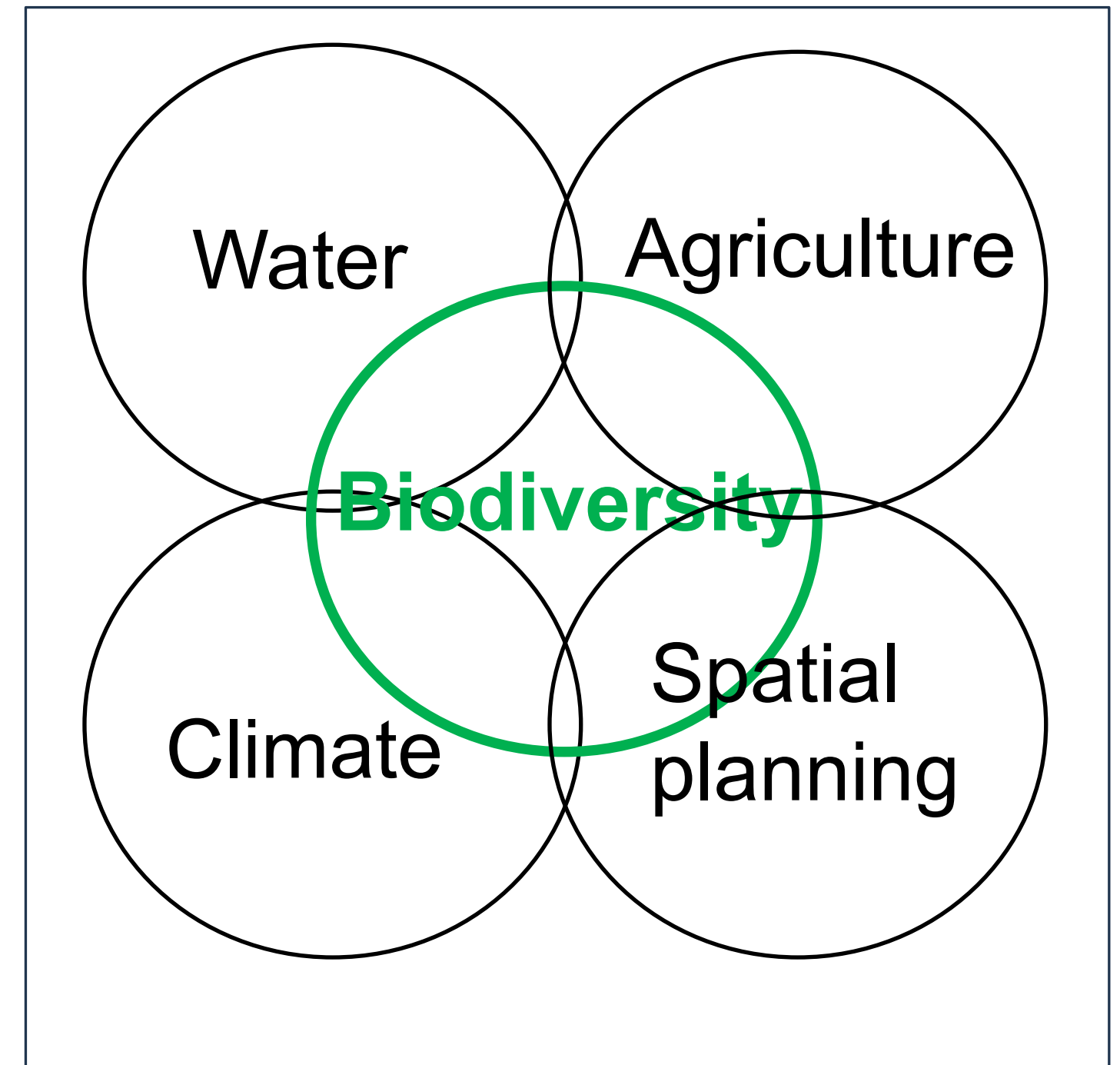
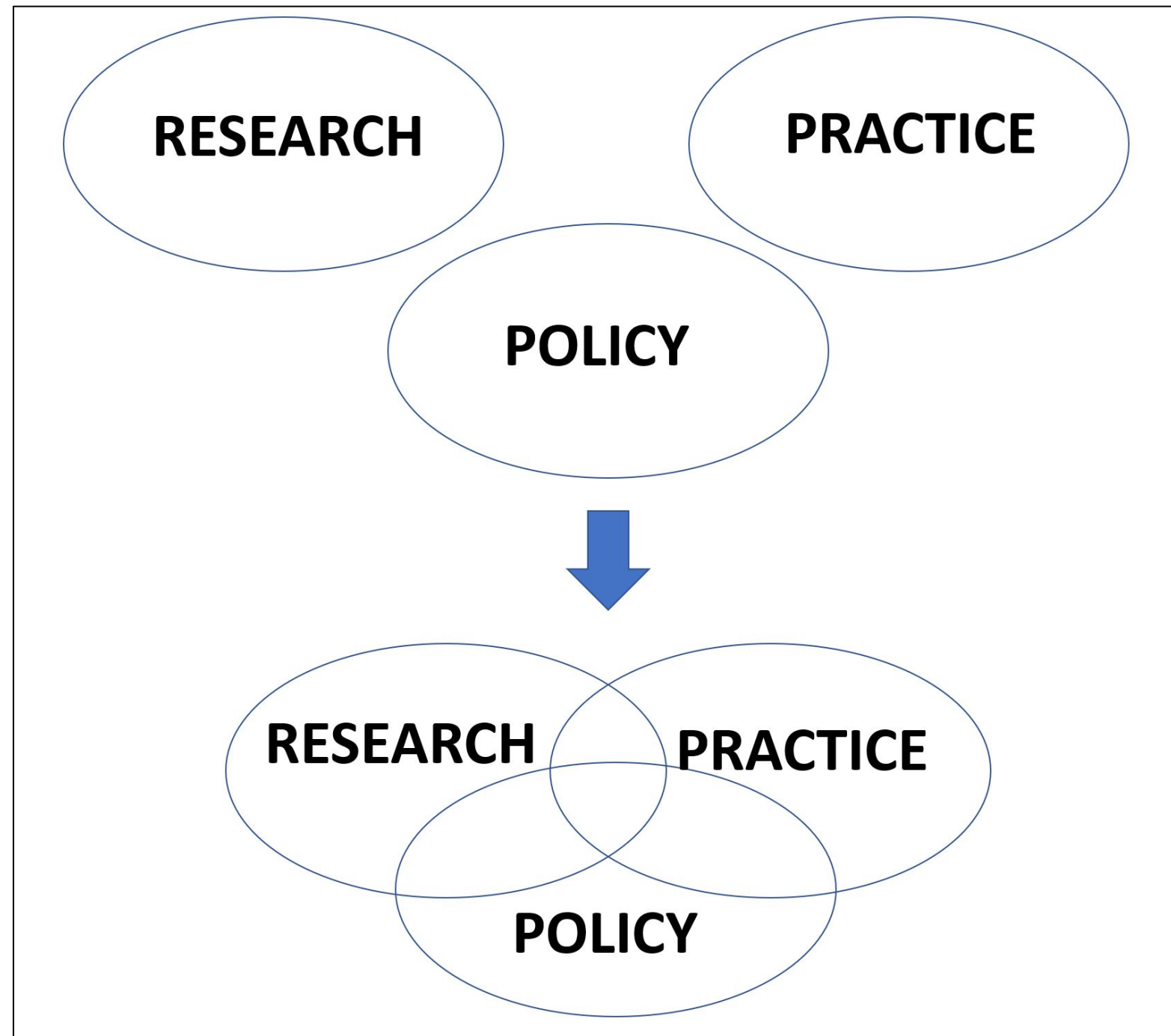
3. More guidance for transformative change

- life cycle analyses of current (unsustainable) practices
- identify enabling factors
- identify alternative socio-economic models
- payment for ecosystem services (?)
- demonstration projects with local ambassadors
- one health approach
- fade out harmful subsidies
- ...

~ economic & social scientists, legal experts, health experts

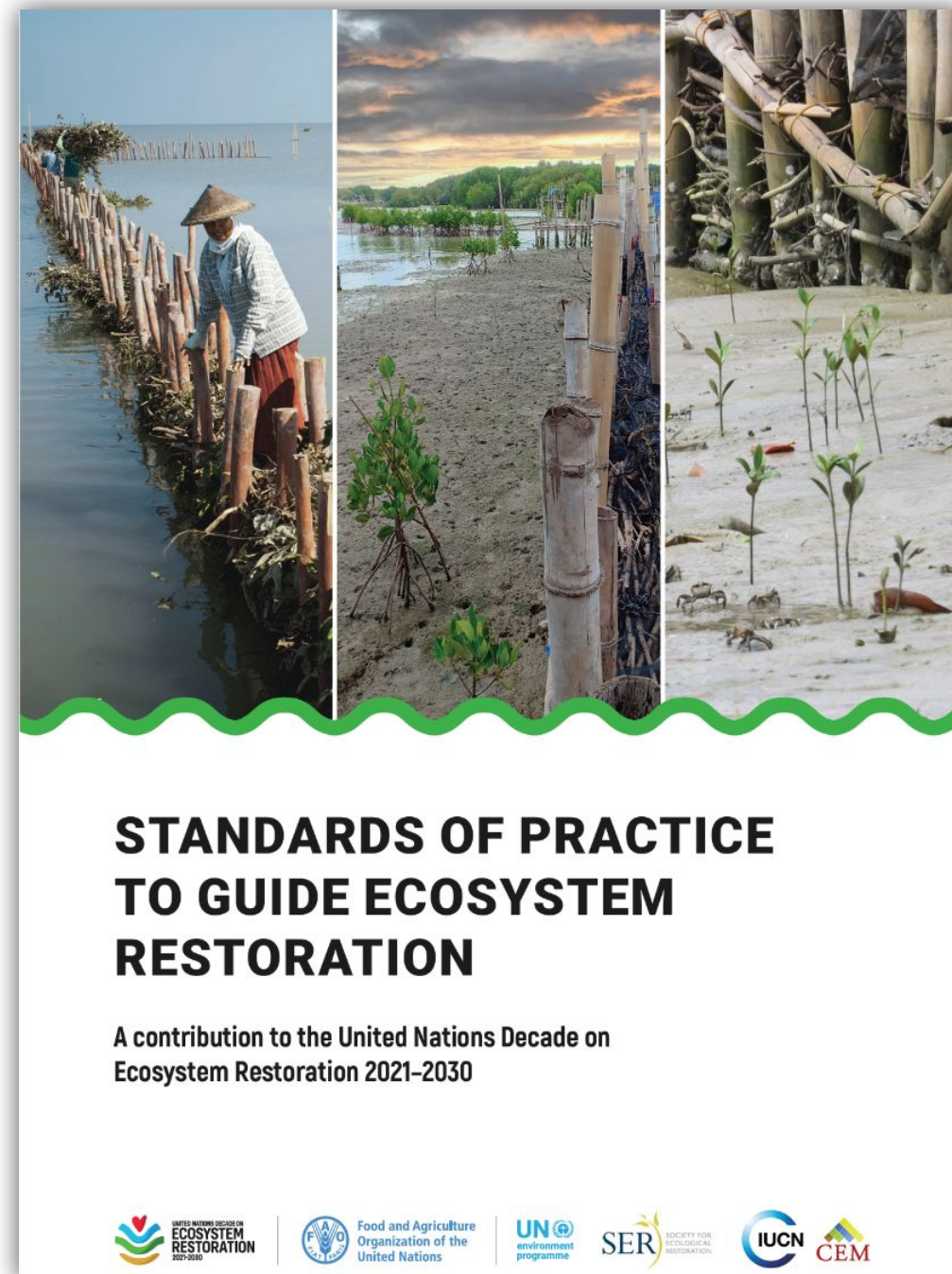
Main working points

4. Integrated planning

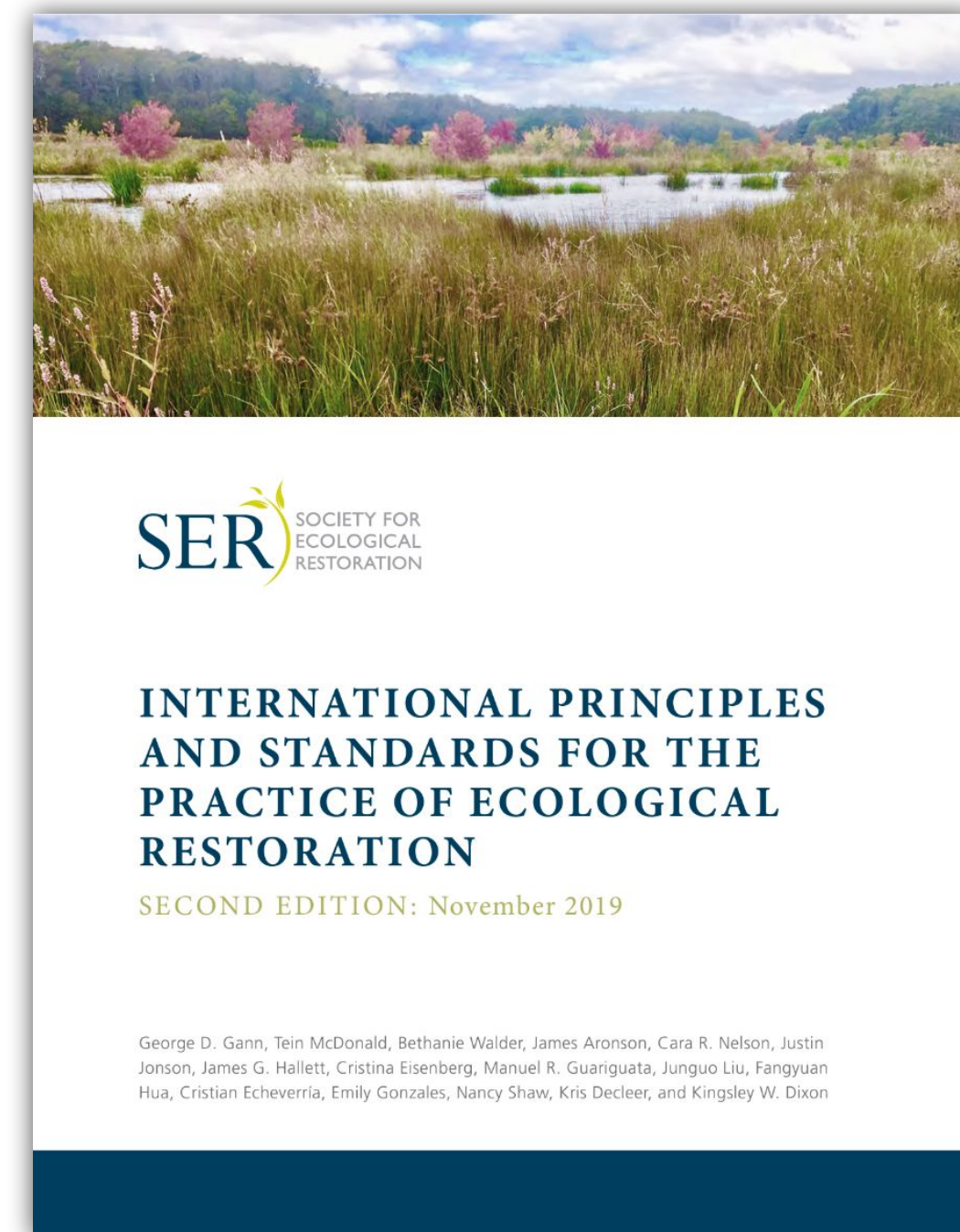


Main working points

5. Optimized knowledge sharing



https://www.ser.org/resource/resmgr/docs/Standards_of_practice_to_gui.pdf



https://www.ser.org/resource/resmgr/publications/ser_international_standards_.pdf

Main working points

5. Optimized knowledge sharing

- ‘standards of practice’
- barrier-informed guidance
- use language for practitioners
- synthesised information
- regular updates
- attractive graphics, visual education
- e-learning platforms
- guidance cost-benefits
- guidance trade-offs & synergies: e.g. climate vs. biodiversity

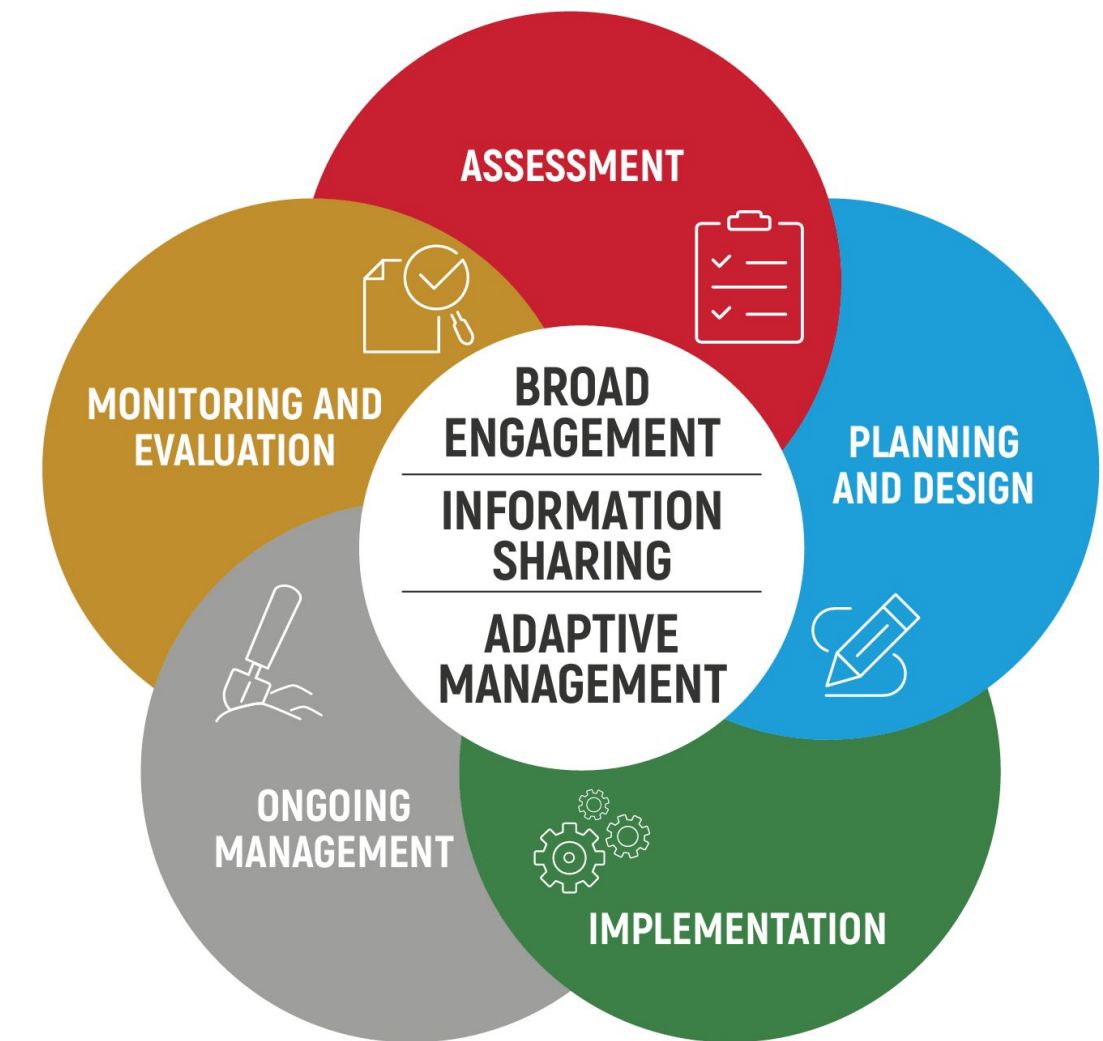


Figure 3. The five components of the restoration process along with cross-cutting subcomponents that apply throughout

Notes: Although presented in a sequential order, the restoration process is not linear, and subcomponents within different components may be conducted simultaneously or in a different order than presented in the *Standards of practice*. Furthermore, practices associated with broad engagement, information sharing (information management and record-keeping; and communication and reporting) and adaptive management should be implemented throughout the restoration process and, therefore, have been included within “cross-cutting” subcomponents that are repeated in more than one component.

Main working points

5. Optimized knowledge sharing

What we need:

European Knowledge Network hub

European
coordination
platform

Thematic expert teams

- Forests
- Wetlands
- Grasslands
- Heathlands
- Rivers
- Coastal
- Marine
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Urban
- Post-mining
- Pollinators
- Species groups
- ...

Structural knowledge exchange facilitation

- Regular thematic workshops and symposia with national experts
 - Development of standards of good practice
 - Share advances in knowledge & knowledge gaps
 - Demonstration projects (certification?)
- European Conferences on restoration where science, practice and policy meet (SERE)

Training

- 'Train the trainers' program (SERE, Biogeographical process)
- Documentation Platform & search engine (BISE, WISE)

Monitoring and reporting (EEA & ETC)

Research (Bioagora, Biodiversa+, Horizon)

- Defining the research agenda
- Science Service
- Support tools (Europabon, Eionet a.o.): e.g. spatial information on land use, socio-economic benefits, climate change, presence of red listed species etc.

+ Financial support service
+ Stakeholder participation (Biodiversity platform)

Main working points

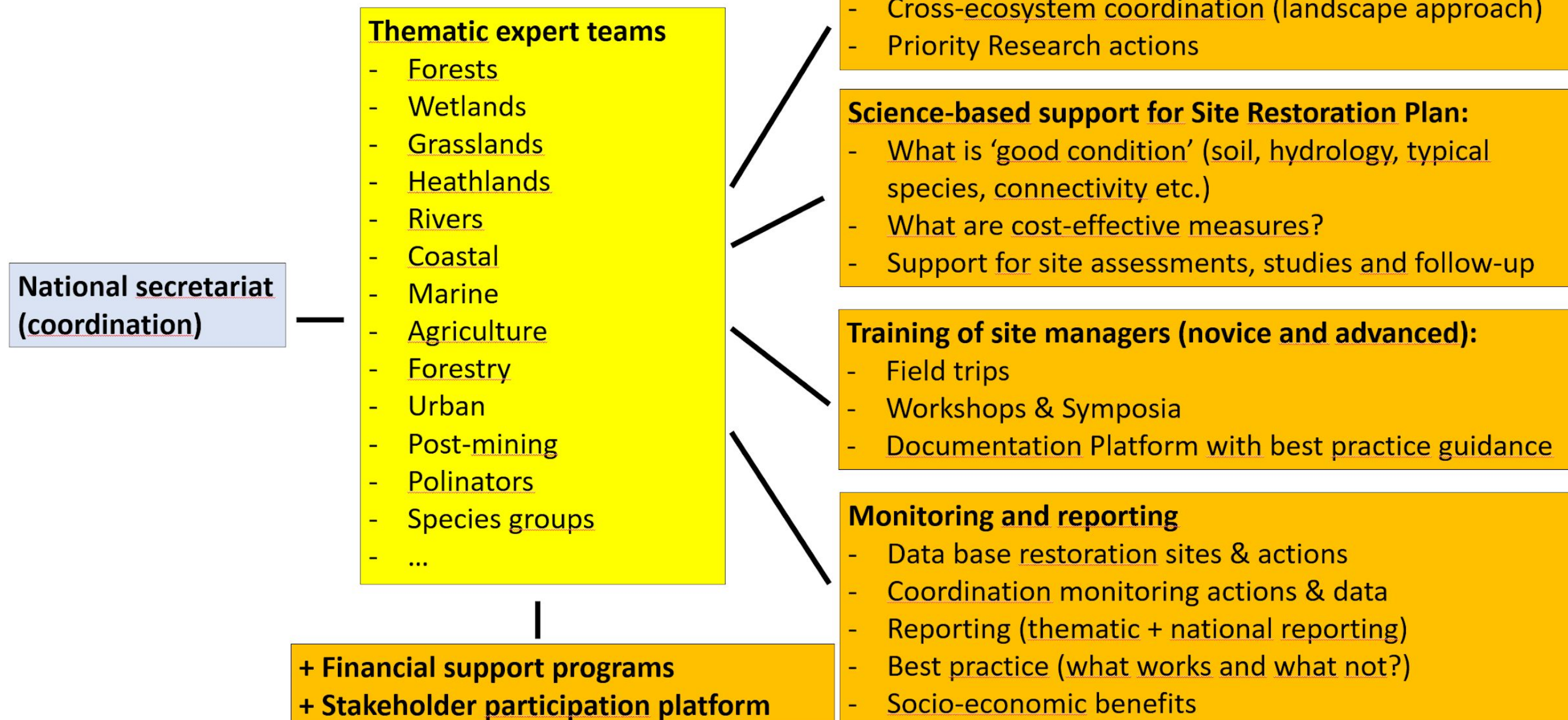
5. Optimized knowledge sharing



Main working points

5. Optimized knowledge sharing

What we need: National Knowledge Network hubs



Thank you!



Kris Decleer, Research Institute for Nature and Forest

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