

**Digest**

# Biodiversa+

*Flagship Programmes Digest*



## Introduction: The strategic framework

### A layered approach

Biodiversa+ operates through a layered framework that connects long-term priorities with concrete action (see *Annex 1* for details):

- **Vision and objectives (the “Why”)**

Biodiversity is the foundation for climate resilience, sustainable economies, food and water security, public health, and social equity. Biodiversa+ aims to strengthen Europe’s capacity to contribute to and collaborate on global efforts to protect and restore nature, ensuring that by 2050, biodiversity knowledge drives the transition toward resilient societies and economies. The partnership delivers impact through five strategic objectives that act as levers for change, turning research and innovation into real-world solutions.

- **Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (the “What”)**

The SRIA translates the “why” into research and innovation (R&I) priorities. Organised into topical and cross-cutting themes, it identifies the knowledge needed to achieve objectives.

- **Flagship Programmes (the “How”)**

The flagship programmes are the primary mechanism for implementing the SRIA. They consist of multi-annual, thematic initiatives that integrate R&I calls, capacity-building, stakeholder engagement, and policy support.

- **Work Packages (the “Who”)**

Work Packages are the operational units responsible for delivery. They translate strategy into action and ensure that results generated within the flagship programmes framework lead to impact.

### Flagship programmes as engines of change

The topics of the flagship programmes were identified as the most **critical areas where a coordinated, pan-European effort can deliver lasting impact**. They are not simple thematic clusters, but holistic, long-term initiatives that:

- Implement the SRIA,
- Align research with EU and global policy priorities,
- Foster innovation, capacity-building, and science-policy dialogue.

Each flagship programme combines multiple activities, from gap analysis, foresight, and mapping to R&I funding, community-building, and policy engagement, making them the central engines of transformative change within Biodiversa+. Crucially, they are **embedded in Europe’s wider policy framework**: contributing to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, supporting the Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR), and strengthening implementation of sectoral strategies and directives on forests, soils, water, marine ecosystems, food systems, climate adaptation, and species protection. This alignment ensures that Biodiversa+ not only funds excellent science but also provides the **evidence and capacity** needed to deliver on Europe’s biodiversity commitments.

## Flagship programme 1

# Securing Europe's natural heritage: From protection to restoration

## Strategic vision

Europe and the world are experiencing unprecedented biodiversity loss, with existing protected areas falling short of safeguarding species, habitats, genetic diversity, evolutionary processes, and the ecosystem services they support. The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, together with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, set **ambitious targets** for this decade, including protecting at least 30% of land and sea and restoring 30% of degraded ecosystems by 2030. These ambitions are reinforced by the EU Nature Restoration Regulation, which introduces legally binding targets: restoring at least 20% of EU land and sea by 2030 and all ecosystems in need by 2050, while emphasising ecological connectivity and investment in green and blue infrastructure.



The flagship programme “Supporting protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems across land and sea” (FS1) translates this policy context into action. Aligned with **Topical Theme 1 of the SRIA**, FS1 generates actionable knowledge to guide **protection and restoration** of Europe’s natural capital. It addresses biodiversity from genetic to ecosystem levels, supports coherent spatial planning, and strengthens the capacity to evaluate costs and benefits of protection and restoration.

## Progress in action

A defining feature of FS1 is its **strategic evolution**. Initially focused on biodiversity protection, it expanded to include active restoration, reflecting the partnership’s responsiveness to evolving European policy priorities:

- Protection pillar:** It is anchored by the 2021-2022 **BiodivProtect** call, which mobilised 34 countries to fund 36 transnational R&I projects with a budget exceeding €44 million. Projects started in 2023 and are now actively generating new knowledge on ecosystem protection. Biodiversa+ has supported this community through a range of activities, including a kick-off meeting, a Science-Policy Forum, and a networking workshop. Capacity-building workshops on topics such as data management, open science, the science-policy interface, and communication were also organised. These activities are systematically offered to each new cohort of funded projects, across all flagship programmes.

- **Restoration pillar:** Building on the 2020 BiodivRestore COFUND Action, FS1 continues to advance restoration science and foster networking. The **BiodivRestore Knowledge Hub** was launched in May 2024 to synthesise evidence and connect experts. High-level dialogues held in 2024 and 2025 with policymakers, researchers, and practitioners helped refine the scope of the 2025-2026 **BiodivConnect** call, focused on restoring ecosystem function, integrity, and connectivity. This call is expected to mobilise over €40 million.

## Key outcomes

FS1 demonstrates Biodiversa+'s role as a crucial intermediary, **translating broad policy ambitions** into targeted research agendas, and ensuring that policy is based on the latest research. Achievements to date include:

- **Advancing understanding** of ecosystem functioning, habitat connectivity, restoration potential, and socio-ecological trade-offs, directly informing EU and Member States' restoration plans.
- **Conducting a desk study** mapping evidence on the effectiveness of terrestrial protected areas.
- **Supporting the BiodivRestore Knowledge Hub**, a lasting platform for evidence synthesis and expert networking.

## Looking ahead

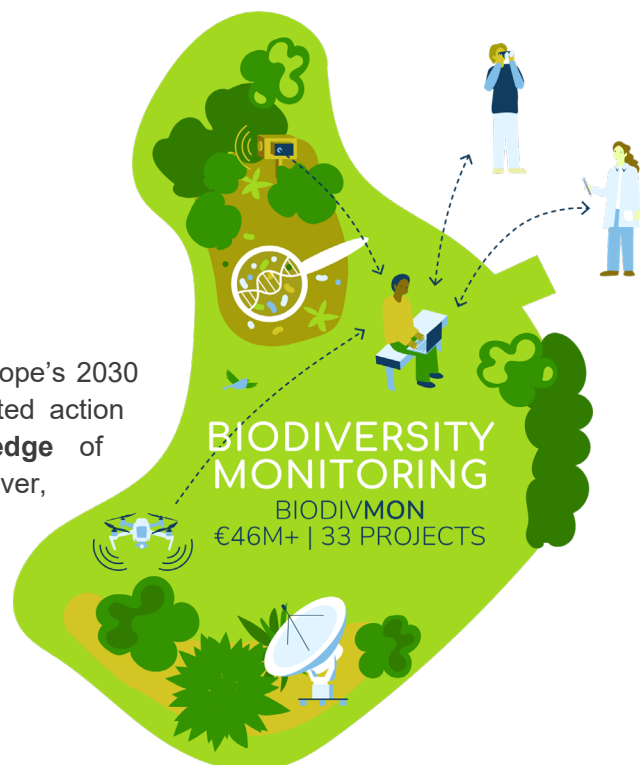
FS1 will continue to consolidate knowledge and support implementation through the BiodivRestore Knowledge Hub, while also following up on research projects from the BiodivProtect and BiodivConnect calls. By combining research, policy support, and stakeholder engagement, FS1 equips Europe to **deliver on ambitious EU and global targets** for biodiversity protection and restoration, bringing tangible benefits for nature, society, and the economy.

### Flagship programme 2

## Monitoring biodiversity: Towards a coherent and integrated vision

### Strategic vision

Reversing biodiversity loss and achieving Europe's 2030 and 2050 targets demands urgent, coordinated action grounded in robust, **high-quality knowledge** of biodiversity status and trends. However, biodiversity data across Europe often remain fragmented, inconsistent, or incomplete, hindering efforts to track trends, assess conservation measures, and guide evidence-based decision-making.



The flagship programme “Better transnational monitoring of biodiversity to better characterise, understand and report on biodiversity dynamics and trends” (FS2) addresses this challenge. Aligned with **Cross-Cutting Theme A of the SRIA**, FS2 aims to lay the groundwork for a durable, transnational network of **harmonised monitoring schemes**. It aligns priorities, fosters interoperability, promotes scalable approaches, and ensures outputs are directly relevant to research, policy, and practice.

### Progress in action

Effective and harmonised biodiversity monitoring requires both robust research and continuous innovation in technologies and processes. FS2 therefore adopts a **dual-track strategy**:

- **Research & innovation**: The 2022-2023 **BiodivMon** call mobilised €46 million to fund 33 transnational projects launched in 2024. These projects are dedicated to improving transnational monitoring, addressing critical knowledge gaps and testing innovative methods such as eDNA, bioacoustics, AI-based image recognition, and remote sensing. A kick-off, a Science-Policy Forum, and a clustering workshop (Tallinn, April 2024) fostered exchange and synergies between the projects, with additional capacity-building activities organised to support impact.
- **Capacity building**: FS2 leverages Biodiversa+'s unique **network of environmental ministries and agencies** to drive transnational coordination and harmonisation efforts. It supports extensive **capacity-building** for researchers and partners through workshops and webinars on topics such as monitoring priorities, indicators, data interoperability, protocol harmonisation, citizen science, and emerging technologies. FS2 has also launched six **transnational pilot projects** to test harmonised approaches and tackle key bottlenecks in transnational monitoring. These pilots focus on defining harmonised protocols, promoting new technologies and governance models, and increasing data availability. Led by Biodiversa+ partners, they build on existing R&I and mark the first practical steps towards transnational biodiversity monitoring networks.

### Key outcomes

FS2 positions Biodiversa+ not just as a research funder, but as a **key integrator connecting pioneering science with operational monitoring practice**, contributing to the EU's ambition for a coordinated, technologically advanced, and policy-relevant biodiversity monitoring network. Achievements to date include:

- **Funding cutting-edge projects** to improve understanding of biodiversity status, dynamics, and trends.
- **Producing strategic frameworks** and practical guidance on governance, protocol harmonisation, monitoring prioritisation, novel technologies, and the sustainability of monitoring schemes.
- **Establishing concrete test cases** for harmonised monitoring through pilots.

### Looking ahead

FS2 will continue to expand and consolidate the monitoring network through follow-up on the BiodivMon projects, new pilots, targeted capacity-building, and collaboration with global data platforms and initiatives. Future work will provide updated guidance on emerging technologies and monitoring priorities, and resources to support sustainable, interoperable biodiversity monitoring across Europe.

### Flagship programme 3

## Mainstreaming nature: Nature-based Solutions and the business case for biodiversity

### Strategic vision

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are a broad framework of actions that protect, conserve, restore, and sustainably manage natural or modified ecosystems to effectively and adaptively address social, economic, and environmental challenges. These solutions provide multiple benefits for human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience, and biodiversity. Despite their clear potential, NbS remain underused and are often **poorly integrated** into policies and economic systems.

The flagship programme “Better knowledge to develop, deploy and assess Nature-based Solutions” (FS3) aims to address this lack of integration and to suggest viable solutions. Aligned with **Cross-cutting Theme B of the SRIA**, FS3 has a dual focus: advancing the science and uptake of NbS, and demonstrating the economic and societal value of biodiversity. Together, these efforts aim to **mainstream NbS and biodiversity into Europe’s economic and societal systems**.



### Progress in action

FS3 marks a strategic shift **from advocacy to implementation**, moving beyond making the case for NbS and business engagement to developing the tools, evidence, and collaborations needed to put them into practice.

- On the research and policy side, the 2023-2024 **BiodivNBS** call mobilised more than €40 million to fund 34 transnational projects and generate new knowledge on how NbS function, including their tipping points, trade-offs, and enabling mechanisms. These projects started in 2025, with a kick-off event organised to foster exchanges, alongside a Science-Policy Forum and capacity-building activities. In addition to R&I, FS3 strengthens Europe’s NbS ecosystem by embedding Biodiversa+ in key coordination platforms such as **NetworkNature+**.
- On the business side, FS3 fosters meaningful **collaboration with the private sector**. It explores the needs of the private sector through workshops, interviews, and surveys to help embed biodiversity into corporate decision-making and investment strategies. FS3 also contributes to the **EU Business@Biodiversity Platform** and engages with international sustainable finance initiatives to support European businesses in taking a leading role in investing in and deploying NbS.

## Key outcomes

Beyond individual projects, FS3 has secured a durable foundation for NbS and business engagement across Europe, ensuring R&I is built on shared priorities and a **continent-wide evidence base**. Achievements to date include:

- **Producing the EU NbS Roadmap to 2030** and expanding the NetworkNature databases on NbS projects and NbS knowledge gaps.
- **Developing practical tools to connect R&I and the private sector**, as well as guidance for companies on using and sharing biodiversity data.
- **Supporting the BiodivClim Knowledge Hub**, which connects experts on NbS for climate mitigation and adaptation and builds on the 2019 BiodivClim COFUND Action.

## Looking ahead

FS3 will follow up on the BiodivNBS projects and continue to expand the evidence base for NbS. Upcoming activities include updating the European NbS Roadmap and supporting its uptake through collaboration with other European initiatives, ensuring NbS evidence is accessible across Europe and integrated into different sectors. On the business side, FS3 will advance biodiversity valuation methods and showcase sector-specific applications to drive change. By **integrating NbS in both policy and markets**, FS3 aims to position biodiversity as a practical driver of resilience, innovation, and sustainable growth.

### Flagship programme 4

## Catalysing sustainability: Transformative change for biodiversity

### Strategic vision

Global assessments show that current trajectories will not meet our 2030 and 2050 goals. To halt and reverse biodiversity loss, we must go beyond addressing direct pressures like pollution and land use, and **tackle the underlying drivers of decline**.



The flagship programme “Supporting societal transformation for the sustainable use and management of biodiversity” (FS4) addresses this challenge. Aligned with **Topical Theme 2 of the SRIA**, FS4 provides the knowledge and methods needed to catalyse systemic shifts. It recognises that conservation and technical solutions alone are not enough. Lasting change depends on **rethinking economic models, governance systems, and social values**, while embedding biodiversity protection and restoration across all sectors and policies.

### Progress in action

FS4 acts as a **backbone programme**, connecting and amplifying the work within the other flagship programmes. It drives transformative change both through its initiatives and the innovative methods used to deliver them.

- At the heart of FS4 is the **BiodivTransform** call (2024-2025), which mobilised more than €40 million from 37 agencies across 32 countries. Particularly emphasising interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, and stakeholder co-production, the call recognises that societal transformation requires more than a single disciplinary lens. An innovative “widening option” was also introduced to encourage participation from underrepresented countries.
- Beyond funding, FS4 is reflected in Biodiversa+’s broader commitment to **societal engagement** through permanent structures like the Advisory Board, Enlarged Stakeholder Board, and Biome network. These ensure ongoing co-design, dialogue, and diverse perspectives across activities.

### Key outcomes

FS4 demonstrates the strength of Biodiversa+’s dual strategy: engaging in extensive **upstream consultation** to shape R&I relevance, and investing heavily in **downstream capacity-building** to empower the research community to conduct this complex work effectively. Achievements to date include:

- **Informing all calls through foresight processes**, with BiodivTransform shaped by stakeholder dialogues and a dedicated knowledge synthesis on NbS and transformative change.
- **Publishing a mapping of international collaboration** in biodiversity and transformative change research, providing a baseline for future cooperation.
- **Building capacity for early-career researchers** to work at the science-policy interface through collaboration with Alternet, including summer schools, project grants, and mentoring.

### Looking ahead

FS4 will continue to act as a backbone programme, leveraging synergies with other flagships. Next steps include following up on BiodivTransform projects, and strengthening links between NbS, private sector engagement, and transformative change. By fostering collaboration and embedding transformative principles in European R&I, FS4 will **consolidate Europe’s capacity to achieve the deep societal changes required** for biodiversity sustainability.

## Conclusion: From vision to transformation

Biodiversa+ was created to help Europe meet the twin challenges of halting biodiversity loss and building a sustainable future. The flagship programmes are the pillars of this effort. Each addresses a critical dimension of the biodiversity crisis, while together they create **a balanced, interconnected response**.

What makes this approach distinctive is not only the breadth of issues covered but also the way they are linked. The flagship programmes are more than funding streams: they are engines of change. They mobilise hundreds of researchers across Europe and beyond, build permanent networks and infrastructures, and ensure that engagement with policymakers, practitioners, and businesses is embedded throughout. Knowledge generated in one area feeds into another, and policy support is grounded in evidence and reinforced by capacity-building. This coherence ensures that **the partnership's work goes beyond isolated projects to build durable pathways for change**, delivering on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

By providing a blueprint for turning scientific excellence into tangible, evidence-based action, the flagship programmes align European and international R&I with global biodiversity goals, **positioning Europe as both a laboratory and a pioneer** in the transition to a nature-positive world.

# Annex 1

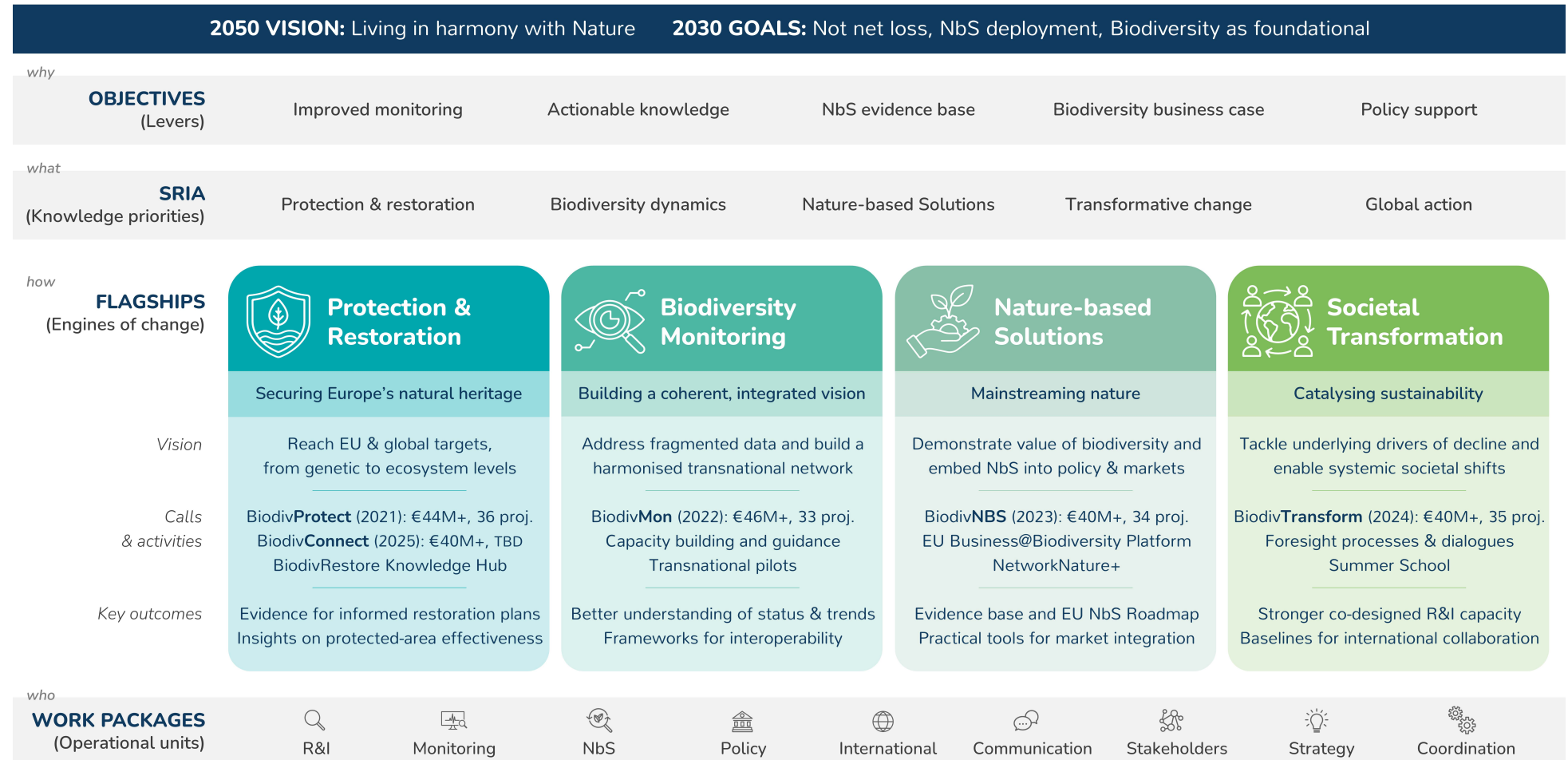
## Detailed framework layers

- 2050 vision: The ultimate ambition aligned with the global vision of “Living in harmony with nature”
- Long-term goals (by 2030)
  - No net loss of ecosystems and an increase in the abundance of threatened species.
  - Widespread deployment of Nature-based Solutions across Europe.
  - Recognition of biodiversity as the foundation for sustainable development, with the EU as a global leader.
- Specific objectives: The five key “levers” the partnership will use to achieve its 2030 goals, representing the direct impact areas for its R&I activities
  - Improved monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
  - Actionable knowledge to tackle the drivers of biodiversity loss.
  - An evidence base for the development and deployment of Nature-based Solutions.
  - Making the business case for biodiversity to integrate its value into economic practices.
  - Science-based support for EU policy-making.
- SRIA themes
  - Topical Theme 1: Better knowledge for biodiversity protection and restoration.
  - Topical Theme 2: Actionable knowledge for transformative change.
  - Topical Theme 3: Better knowledge to support the EU's global action.
  - Cross-Cutting Theme A: Better knowledge on biodiversity and its dynamics.
  - Cross-Cutting Theme B: Better knowledge to develop, deploy, and assess NbS
- Flagships:
  - Supporting protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem across land and sea
  - Better transnational monitoring of biodiversity to better characterize, understand and report on biodiversity dynamics and trends
  - Better knowledge to develop, deploy and assess nature-based solutions
  - Supporting societal transformation for the sustainable use and management of biodiversity
- Work Packages
  - Promote and support R&I programmes and projects across the ERA
  - Promote and support transnational biodiversity monitoring
  - Promote and support design and implementation of NbS, and valuation of biodiversity in private sectors
  - Connecting R&I programmes, results and experts to policy
  - Internationalisation of European R&I activities
  - Communication, outreach and open science
  - Stakeholder engagement
  - Develop and promote a common Partnership vision and strategy
  - Coordination and management

Topics such as biodiversity monitoring or NbS appear across several layers. Their role shifts depending on context: as levers in the objectives, as priorities in the SRIA, as frameworks in the Flagships, and as delivery structures in the Work Packages. This ensures strategic coherence and operational effectiveness, linking research priorities directly to real-world impact.

## Annex 2

### Flagship programmes within the strategic framework.



Flagship programmes are interconnected engines of change, translating science into tangible, evidence-based action to meet EU and global biodiversity goals and build a sustainable future.