



PRESS RELEASE

11 April 2017

Bank On Nature: First loan agreement backed by Natural Capital Financing Facility signed in Brussels

The European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) have announced the first loan agreement backed by the Natural Capital Financing Facility.

The EUR 6 million loan agreement with [Rewilding Europe Capital](#) is expected to provide support for over 30 nature-focused businesses across Europe. Rewilding Europe Capital is Europe's first conservation and rewilding enterprise financing facility.

With this first project an ambitious new initiative to protect biodiversity and support climate adaptation in Europe has become reality. The Bank on Nature Initiative builds on the [Natural Capital Financing Facility](#) (NCFF), an established financing partnership between the European Commission and the European Investment Bank supporting nature and climate adaptation projects through tailored loans and investments, backed by an EU guarantee. It recognises and fosters the business case for investing in natural capital for biodiversity and climate change adaptation purposes.

Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries said, *"Nature is essential for our lives, and our economy. The recent successful evaluation of the EU nature directives illustrated this. The rewilding Europe project will be the first of many that the Bank on Nature initiative, building on the Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF), will assist in our plans to create rural jobs and protect nature"*.

Jonathan Taylor, EIB Vice-President responsible for Climate and Environment said, *"To safeguard and restore Europe's precious habitats and wildlife we need to do more. There is a great business case for investing in nature. Biodiversity and economic growth can go hand in hand. As the EU Bank we are committed to investing in projects that support a vibrant rural economy, while also safeguarding our biodiversity and wisely managing natural capital. The Natural Capital Financing Facility is a ground breaking partnership between the EU Bank and the European Commission and this first project with Rewilding Europe Capital gets us off to the best possible start"*.

Ilko Bosman, Executive Director of Rewilding Europe Capital said, *"The contract with the EIB that we've signed today is a great step forward for Rewilding Europe Capital. Not only will it allow us to really accelerate our facility, but above all by attracting external finance we can increase our ability to showcase how commercial finance can contribute to nature conservation and rewilding. With the proposed EIB/EU loan, all EU 28 countries will be considered and larger loan sizes will be permitted, including new nature-related business models in sectors like forestry, water management and tourism."*

Rewilding Europe Capital was established in 2014 by Rewilding Europe, which promotes wild nature as an important and inherent aspect of Europe's natural and cultural heritage. As one of Rewilding Europe's tools, Rewilding Europe Capital finances nature-based businesses and uses a unique levy system to help support conservation and rewilding initiatives. This will also help better implementation of the [EU's Habitats and Birds Directives](#).

A key element of the project is to build a 'business case for the wild'. The rewilding areas, which could be supported by the agreement signed today, comprise 38 different sites in the [Natura 2000 network](#). These rewilding areas are: Western Iberia (Portugal), Velebit Mountains (Croatia), Central Apennines (Italy), Southern Carpathians (Romania), Danube Delta (Romania), Rhodope Mountains (Bulgaria), Oder Delta (Germany/Poland) and Lapland (Sweden). The comeback of iconic and threatened European wildlife species such as the European bison, brown bear, black vultures as well as pelicans and white-tailed eagles of the Danube and Oder Delta, to name a few, could also benefit from the investments.

As well as supporting the creation and consolidation of nature-based businesses, new nature-related business models will be supported in sectors like forestry, water management, sustainable fisheries and tourism. Today's agreement is expected to create 250 jobs.

For more information see [MEMO](#).

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Q&A on the Natural Capital Financing Facility and Rewilding Europe Capital

What is the Natural Capital Financing Facility?

The Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCF) is a financial instrument that combines EIB financing and European Commission funding under the [LIFE Programme](#), the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. The NCF will contribute to meeting the objectives set out by LIFE, in particular "nature and biodiversity" and "climate change adaptation" by providing financial solutions to bankable projects that promote the conservation, restoration, management and enhancement of natural capital for biodiversity and climate adaptation benefits. This includes ecosystem-based solutions to challenges related to land, soil, forestry, agriculture, water and waste.

Eligible projects under the NCFE include payments for ecosystem services, green infrastructure, biodiversity offsetting and investments for innovative pro-biodiversity and climate adaptation businesses. A budget of €100 – 125 million is available for the period up to 2019. The European Commission provides up to €50 million as a guarantee for the investments with an additional grant support facility of €10 million for technical assistance. Recipients for NCFE could include public and private entities, including public authorities, land owners and businesses. At any time, potential project developers can contact the EIB to express an interest in the facility and discuss the suitability of their ideas. Proposals will be considered for approval by the Bank, after satisfactory due diligence and selection by the Bank, within the constraints of the available budget.

What is Rewilding Europe Capital?

Rewilding Europe Capital (REC) is Europe's first 'rewilding enterprise' funding facility that provides financing to new and existing businesses that leverage opportunities created by the emerging rewilding movement across Europe.

REC is part of the enterprise component of Rewilding Europe, which is working to build a business case for wild nature in Europe. REC was established to positively stimulate and mature enterprise economies connected to natural landscapes in Europe, and directly supports businesses fostering conservation and rewilding impact. REC achieves this by providing commercial funding to businesses that can:

- Positively address negative socioeconomic impacts caused by rural land abandonment that is happening in many areas in Europe;
- Directly and indirectly support rewilding processes and activities in Europe;
- Deliver economic returns from nature and wildlife-related sectors that create incentives to conserve natural landscapes and rural cultures and heritage connected to them.

Useful links:

The Natural Capital Financing Facility

http://www.eib.europa.eu/attachments/documents/ncff_terms_eligibility_en.pdf

<http://www.eib.europa.eu/products/blending/ncff/index.htm>

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/financial_instruments/ncff.htm

Rewilding Europe Capital

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