



ADVANCING EU-LAC COOPERATION ON NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

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Cooperation in research and innovation between the European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is gaining momentum, with nature-based solutions (NbS) emerging as a central priority.

NbS are vital in addressing the biodiversity and climate crises as they offer a comprehensive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, while restoring ecosystems, boosting resilience, and supporting both biodiversity and human well-being.

The 2023 EU-CELAC Summit Declaration and the joint communication on strengthening the EU-LAC partnership emphasise the strategic significance of NbS, positioning them as a central focus of the Strategic Roadmap for Research and Innovation.

Recent high-level engagements, including the first bi-regional NbS conference in June 2024, reflect this growing collaboration, uniting policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders in addressing shared environmental challenges.

A new expert report titled **'Bridging Continents with nature: Exploring the state-of-play of Nature-based Solutions in the EU and LAC: Building a foundation for collaboration'** provides an overview of the current NbS landscape in both regions, and outlines pathways for deepening bi-regional cooperation through knowledge-sharing, policy alignment, and joint action. Key findings of the report include:

KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR NBS IN LAC AND EUROPE

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Rapid urbanisation and socio-economic challenges require NbS that are both environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive. NbS projects — particularly in areas like ecosystem-based adaptation and disaster risk reduction — are advancing through government policies, research initiatives, and community-led efforts.

However, gaps remain, including the need to:

- Improve local implementation capacity
- Foster inclusive governance
- Secure sustainable financing
- Respect Indigenous and traditional knowledge

EUROPE

The European Commission has invested over €660 million in NbS through its Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe research and innovation funding programmes. This research has generated a robust evidence base, enabling the integration of NbS into key European Green Deal policies like the EU Biodiversity Strategy and its Nature Restoration Law, and the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy. To maximise impact, the region needs to focus on:

- Measurable targets at the national level
- More ambitious urban green space initiatives
- Boosting private funding

Research and
Innovation



Despite progress, both regions face shared barriers, including policy and regulatory obstacles, insufficient funding, and difficulties in integrating diverse knowledge systems. These challenges underscore the importance of continued collaboration to fully realise the potential of NbS.



STRATEGIC PATHWAYS FOR ENHANCED COLLABORATION

The report identifies 5 key collaboration pathways between the two regions:



Sharing knowledge, data, and expertise

Establishing mutual learning and knowledge-sharing platforms like Oppla (EU) and Naturaleza Transformativa (LAC) can facilitate cross-regional exchange of best practices, case studies, and technological innovations. Joint research projects would address shared challenges and build long-term academic and professional relationships, strengthening implementation capacity in both regions.



Addressing Policy and Regulatory Barriers

Mainstreaming NbS in sectoral policies and decision-making processes requires harmonised policies and supportive legal frameworks. Jointly developed regulations can stimulate investment and foster cross-border initiatives.



Enabling innovative financing mechanisms

Leveraging innovative financing mechanisms such as green bonds, public-private partnerships, and financial incentives can attract private sector investment. Partnerships between public and private sectors can pool expertise and capital, could enable larger-scale projects while sharing risks and benefits.



Engaging local communities in NbS design and implementation

Empowering local communities through participatory planning processes and capacity-building initiatives ensures the viability of NbS. Training programmes and toolkits can promote long-term stewardship and support community-led projects that address local environmental and social challenges.



Enhancing Multi-Level and Bi-Regional Collaborations

City-to-city and country-to-country initiatives between LAC and EU partners can promote joint NbS projects tailored to address specific environmental issues. Broader intercontinental collaborations can amplify the regions' influence on global biodiversity and sustainability agendas.

LOOKING AHEAD: TURNING AMBITIONS INTO ACTION

The urgency to advance these pathways is underscored by the upcoming two-year anniversary of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This represents a key opportunity to translate global biodiversity goals into concrete NbS actions. An ongoing EU-LAC Policy Dialogue on Nature-Based Solutions could serve as a critical framework for organising regular joint planning and implementation efforts, advocating for the integration of NbS into global environmental agendas, and ensuring that the benefits of NbS are equitably shared.

By acting decisively and in concert, the EU and LAC can inspire and lead the way in leveraging NbS to address environmental, social, and economic challenges while enhancing biodiversity, human well-being, and resilience across both regions.

This collaboration could serve as an inspiration to other continents.

Read the full report here



<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/671490d0-85f4-11ef-a67d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

