



## Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity in summary



### What is nature-based climate action?

Intact ecosystems are a natural defence against climate change. Forests and floodplains, soils and peatlands, seas and water bodies, urban and rural near-natural green spaces remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it for the long term. Intact ecosystems also act as buffers against the impacts of climate change by accommodating floodwaters and providing cooling during hot weather. Not least, they sustain our foundations of life, provide important habitats for animals and plants, store water and are places of respite and recreation for people.

The Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity will protect, strengthen and restore ecosystems. The plan links climate action with nature conservation and ensures that degraded ecosystems regain their health, their resilience and their biodiversity through a variety of measures.

## Intact nature protects us in three ways

- **Climate change mitigation:** Nature helps us fight global warming and achieve our climate targets. Healthy ecosystems store carbon dioxide. But the opposite is also true: when ecosystems are destroyed, they release the carbon they have stored over millennia in a short space of time. If we strengthen intact nature and restore damaged ecosystems, we actively support greenhouse gas mitigation and climate action.
- **Biodiversity:** Nature helps us maintain biodiversity and preserve the natural foundations of our lives. Healthy ecosystems provide habitat for a great diversity of animals and plants. Nature never stops working for people. For example, microscopic organisms keep our soils fertile, and insects pollinate our crops.
- **Climate preparedness:** Nature helps us prepare for the impacts of the climate crisis, which we are already feeling. We are experiencing heat waves and droughts on the one hand, heavy rainfall and flooding on the other.
- Healthy forests, peatlands and floodplains hold water in the landscape. They can absorb water and store it for periods of drought. They also stand ready as inundation areas in the event of flooding. Preserving them can strengthen and restore the near-natural water balance. In this area, the Action Plan is closely connected to the National Water Strategy.

## What will the Action Plan achieve?

The plan comprises 69 measures in a total of ten fields of action, for example, peatlands, forest ecosystems, seas and coasts, settlement and transport areas or research and capacity building. Until 2026, four billion euros are earmarked for implementing the plan.

## Broad support for nature-based climate action

The Action Plan is the result of a comprehensive participatory process. The Federal Environment Ministry received around 120 opinions and more than 1,000 online comments. The content of every proposed improvement was reviewed. The plan met with a great deal of approval and support. It helped forge a broad alliance for implementation including landowners, nature conservationists and other local stakeholders.

## **Implementation steps in cities and the countryside**

Where possible and feasible, implementation will begin immediately. The first steps need to be launched quickly in coordination with other federal ministries. Some examples include:

- establishing a Centre of Competence for Nature-based Climate Action. This will provide interested parties like landowners with information about suitable funding opportunities in their region.
- the funding guideline on nature-based climate action in rural municipalities. Municipal projects need to deliberately use land to promote climate action and biodiversity, make rural areas more attractive and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- the package of measures on urban nature. This package is intended, for example, to de-seal surfaces, support near-natural redesign of existing green spaces and encourage planting of urban trees. Urban green makes cities liveable, also under climate crisis conditions. Green spaces keep the air clean, promote cool air in summer via evaporation and store water like a sponge during rain.

## **Future efforts in peatlands and forests**

Major climate effects often require long-term changes. This is true, for instance, in the case of peatlands and forests. They are important as habitats for animals and plants, for a functioning water balance and as carbon sinks. 53 million tonnes of greenhouse gas are released every year in Germany solely because drained peat soils cannot provide the ecosystem services they normally would.

Rewetting peatlands is a long-term project that will take decades, just like the conversion of coniferous forest plantations to near-natural mixed forests. The first step must be creating implementation structures in these areas. To some extent, existing structures can be used, but some must be built from scratch. With the Action Plan, we are ensuring that funding goes where it can best be used so that nature-based climate action can unfold its long-term benefits. A robust and resilient natural world is our insurance policy. With the Action Plan, we are going a long way towards achieving this.