

# Rewilding Europe®

Making Europe a Wilder Place



European Union | European Regional Development

*Sharing solutions for  
better regional policies*



## Pioneers in rewilding enterprise Business cases for a greener world

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# PART A – Introduction to Rewilding enterprises

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## 1 Rewilding Europe and rewilding enterprises

Rewilding Europe wants to demonstrate that rewilding is a competitive form of land use and illustrate that investment in nature can generate new business opportunities, jobs and income. By building this "business case for the wild", we can provide new opportunities for rural economies across Europe - economies which are today often associated with declining economic productivity, rural depopulation, and land abandonment. In other words: we encourage, catalyse and incubate nature-based economies.

Nature-based businesses with compelling offerings can create new economic opportunities which benefit nature and people - rather than exploiting them - and also help to address climate change.

Rewilding Europe was one of the first European conservation organisations to recognise the potential of enterprise as a means of securing more space for wilder nature. Since 2013, we have been working with enterprises across Europe to support the integration of rewilding principles into their business plans. Rewilding Europe's enterprise team brings together people with significant international experience in business, finance and rewilding. This team is dedicated to helping businesses and communities revitalise rural economies, with the wider goal of stimulating a pan-European rewilding enterprise movement.

### What is a rewilding enterprise?

A rewilding enterprise generates direct or indirect finance, incentives or engagement for rewilding, and has a positive impact on wilder nature or the comeback of wildlife. It has a viable business case and operates in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner.

### Best practices report: for whom and why

Today, there is significant enthusiasm among entrepreneurs to either start rewilding businesses, or to integrate rewilding principles into existing businesses. This enthusiasm, in part, is driven by a desire to help address our nature and climate emergencies. Many of these entrepreneurs are seeking information, knowledge and lessons derived from existing rewilding business cases, particularly regarding the financial and economic prospects of nature-driven enterprises. Many NGOs, governments and government-related bodies are also interested in integrating rewilding and nature conservation within their strategies for regional development.

This report, which is directed at a range of audiences interested in nature-based economies, aims to address this demand by providing an overview of some of Europe's most pioneering rewilding enterprises. It aims to increase understanding of how nature can be an economic basis for regional development and its potential for entrepreneurs and existing businesses.

### Reading guide

Part A outlines the broader picture of nature-based economies and some mechanisms and instruments that governments, financial institutions and others develop to facilitate nature-based economies and rewilding enterprises (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 provides an overview of lessons learned from the case studies and from ten years of experience of the Rewilding Europe enterprise team in developing and supporting rewilding business.

Part B gives brief case study descriptions of fourteen pioneering European rewilding and wildlife businesses..

## Rewilding enterprise support

Rewilding entrepreneurship is in its early stages in Europe. Providing guidance and technical support to new enterprises is as vital for these businesses as financial support. Rewilding Europe offers this support in different ways.

- **Guidance and technical support:** We provide technical support to existing and potential businesses, e.g. training and development or revision of business plans.
- **Financial support:** We provide financial support through Rewilding Europe Capital (REC), our enterprise loan facility.

## Wildlife Economies Intereg Europe project

This report has been created as part of the Wildlife Economies (WLE) project, which is co-financed by the European Union's Interreg Europe programme. This programme aims to improve policies - particularly those in Europe. Within the programme, the WLE project focused on the interface between nature and economy, advocating the argument that nature can be a viable basis for regional development.

[www.interregeurope.eu/wle](http://www.interregeurope.eu/wle)

## 2 The broader picture: nature-based economies

Today, interest in developing nature-based economies (NBEs) continues to increase across Europe and worldwide. The growth of such economies can be stimulated through the development of rewilding enterprises. For many rural areas, the nature-based economic sector is often one of the most viable, and an effective answer to the threats posed by land abandonment. A wide variety of institutions and organisations not only recognise this potential, but are also developing mechanisms that can help create NBEs. In this way, these institutions are directly or indirectly creating a more beneficial position for rewilding enterprises.

This chapter aims to contextualise the development of rewilding enterprises. It sets out to identify the threats and opportunities of rural land abandonment. It also shows that the economic impetus to act against the loss of biodiversity is increasingly well recognised by large corporates and financial institutions, and presents examples of some instruments that have been developed to create an enabling economic and financial environment for rewilding enterprises.

### Impacts of rural land abandonment

Rural to urban migration in Europe has occurred since the Industrial Revolution. This migration, which continues to transform rural economies, societies and landscapes, causes many issues - particularly in remoter rural areas.

#### Threats

Issues caused by this migration include a decline in the provision of rural goods and services, lack of public and private investment, and increasingly limited employment opportunities exacerbated by the mechanisation of agrarian and forestry production processes. Rural populations are also aging, while the cultural heritage and traditional skills of rural areas are being eroded.

In terms of land productivity and biodiversity, the situation is also deteriorating. This may seem a paradox. However, declining rural populations do not automatically lead to nature recovery. There is often a fall in the relative production values of marginal rural land, driven by dynamics such as diminishing soil nutrients, volatile local climates, and poor accessibility. A decline in grazing arising from the loss of domesticated livestock frequently leads to encroachment by shrubs and trees, negatively impacting populations of wildlife species dependent on open and half-open (mosaic) landscapes.

### Opportunities around rural land abandonment

Although land abandonment can have negative consequences, including biodiversity loss and socio-economic decline, it also presents compelling new opportunities. With its enterprise component, Rewilding Europe aims to illustrate how these opportunities can be leveraged to build new nature-driven economies that can reverse these damaging trends.

#### *Environmental impact*

- Less human influence means natural processes have a chance to help improve the natural environment and restore nature.
- Wildlife species can return and experience less conflict with humans, and food chains can recover.
- Dynamic, mosaic landscapes can develop, driven by large herbivores and large carnivores, supporting species of a wide range of open/semi-open habitats.

#### *Socio-economic impact*

- New businesses can develop based on wilder landscapes and wildlife comeback, offering new and adapted products.
- Provision of new job and income opportunities.

- Social coherence and local society are enhanced where new local businesses build networks and generate multiplier effects.
- Reduces dependency on subsidies.

#### *Cultural impact*

- Younger people and families returning to the countryside looking for new opportunities, bringing new life into rural communities.
- Local/regional branding of areas and products providing new identities and local pride that are nature/wildlife-related.
- Cultural heritage and traditional skills reinvigorated and in a different setting.

### **Kick-starting rewilding**

The need for healthier nature is urgent. In many instances, we can't simply rely on natural processes to restore ecosystems after decades, if not centuries, of degradation. Nature may need a helping hand to kickstart the rewilding process - for example, by restoring populations of large grazers or other keystone species that are missing from an ecosystem. Active rewilding also makes sense from a socio-economic perspective. Accelerating the process of nature recovery enables local communities to benefit sooner, alternative livelihoods around recovered nature to be developed, and generates competition with other potential uses for the abandoned land.

### **Biodiversity loss as an economic threat, rewilding as an opportunity**

In September 2021, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) organised a summit for business leaders taking action to combat biodiversity loss and climate change. The companies involved represented more than US \$1 trillion in market capital and \$655 billion in annual turnover underscoring the business case for taking action to reduce the environmental impact of global industry. Those involved in the summit agreed that more transformative partnerships are urgently needed to achieve a nature positive future<sup>1</sup>.

"All our products are closely connected with nature – they take their character, their identity and their quality from the terroirs, where they are grown... Valuing, protecting and conserving it so that we can pass on healthy terroirs to future generations is therefore not only a moral and civic obligation but also a necessity for the future of our Group

**Alexandre Ricard**, Chair and CEO of Pernod Ricard, annual turnover around 10 billion<sup>2</sup>.

A study by the Dutch Central Bank (DNB) and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency has made an inventory of the extent to which Dutch financial institutions are dependent on biodiversity<sup>3</sup>. The study shows that loss of biodiversity causes severe financial risks. Worldwide, Dutch financial institutions have €510 billion invested in enterprises with a high or very high dependence on ecosystem services. This represents 36% of the total finance invested. Examples of the main types of risks include pollination, with €28 billion exposed to pollination-dependent products; reputation risks, with €96 billion is exposed to risks

<sup>1</sup> [www.iucn.org/news/business-and-biodiversity/202109/global-business-leaders-outline-efforts-build-a-nature-positive-future-iucn-ceo-summit](https://www.iucn.org/news/business-and-biodiversity/202109/global-business-leaders-outline-efforts-build-a-nature-positive-future-iucn-ceo-summit)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pernod-ricard.com/en/media/pernod-ricard-becomes-first-company-support-iucn-s-agriculture-and-land-health-initiative-new>

<sup>3</sup> DNB en PBL (2020). Biodiversiteit en de financiële sector: een kruisbestuiving? Verkenning van risico's van biodiversiteitsverlies voor de Nederlandse financiële sector. <https://www.dnb.nl/media/uq4bcyol/brochure-biodiversiteit.pdf>



related to negative impacts on biodiversity<sup>4</sup> and € 97 billion invested in companies with reputation risks related to deforestation; and €81 billion is subject to transition risks, as this is invested in enterprises that are likely to require investments in more environmentally friendly business activities.

## **Nature, rewilding and jobs**

A recent study of 33 rewilding sites in Britain found that full-time equivalent jobs increased 47% as a result of rewilding (from an average of 151 to 222). The sources of income also diversified with new activities including nature-based tourism, monitoring, restoration activities, informal recreation and education. Rewilding Britain concludes that “*data suggests rewilding on marginal land can increase employment by 50% and diversify jobs without halting traditional agricultural activities*”<sup>5</sup>.

The report “*Rewilding and the Rural Economy*” presents a vision for the creation of nature-based economies across Britain. It highlights how a diverse range of nature recovery projects across Britain are already delivering social and economic benefits. It also argues that rewilding can increase and diversify rural and coastal jobs, as well as help Britain meet its biodiversity and climate commitments. To substantiate this claim, they cite the fact that nature-based tourism currently generates £1.4 billion a year and is responsible for 39,000 full-time equivalent jobs in Scotland alone. According to the report, expanding nature recovery and urban green infrastructure could create over 16,000 new jobs, particularly in rural areas.

Another UK study states that “*an expanded programme of nature restoration, peatland restoration, woodland creation, and urban green infrastructure could create ‘at least 16,050 jobs in the 20% of constituencies likely to face the most significant employment challenges’*”.<sup>6</sup>

A global nature conservation study analysed 62 sites and found that 70% of conserved or restored sites were worth more in net economic benefits than if the land was put to alternative use. Forests, in particular, were highlighted as a core component which were more valuable when conserved<sup>7</sup>.

## **Financial and policy instruments for structural change: towards an enabling environment for entrepreneurs**

The importance of nature for society and economy is well-documented. With the natural world providing a huge range of essential ecosystem services, the cost-benefit ratio of investments in nature is incredibly positive. The challenge now is to transform this awareness into action and create an enabling environment for the scaling up of nature-based entrepreneurship. Multiple pathways must be developed alongside one another to ensure a better outcome for society, nature and climate. These pathways include using rules and regulations to stimulate nature positive behaviour, as well as to prevent and disincentivise nature negative behaviour. More finance should be made available for nature positive businesses and stopped / limited to nature negative businesses. In addition, consumers must cut down their use of nature negative goods and services and demand nature positive behaviour from the companies they buy from.

The pioneering rewilding businesses identified in Part B of this document are all nature positive and economically successful. While some of them benefitted from an enabling environment, far more work is

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<sup>4</sup> An example quoted in the report: “The company owns a 50% interest in Samarco Mineracao, which operated the failing tailings dam. The dam failure resulted in multiple casualties and widespread environmental and property damage, particularly in the village of Bento Rodrigues. Over 600 residents were displaced, and water supplies to thousands of residents in Minas Gerais state were disrupted due to the tailings spill. Mud and mining waste from the tailings dam severely contaminated over 650 kilometres of the Doce river system, smothering fish and other wildlife downstream of the dam”.

<sup>5</sup> Rewilding and the rural economy, October 2021, Rewilding Britain and Conservation Capital <https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.rewildingbritain.org.uk/documents/nature-based-economies-rewilding-britain.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> WPI Economics / Green Alliance, 2021: ‘Green Renewal – The Economics of Enhancing the Natural Environment’. [https://green-alliance.org.uk/resources/Green\\_renewal\\_WPI.pdf](https://green-alliance.org.uk/resources/Green_renewal_WPI.pdf) . See also: RSPB and Cambridge Econometrics (2021). Economic benefits of nature-based climate solutions. [www.camecon.com/what/our-work/rspb-economic-benefits-of-nature-based-climate-solutions/#](http://www.camecon.com/what/our-work/rspb-economic-benefits-of-nature-based-climate-solutions/#)

<sup>7</sup> Bradbury, R.B., Butchart, S.H.M., Fisher, B. et al. The economic consequences of conserving or restoring sites for nature. Nat Sustain 4, 602–608 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-021-00692-9>

needed to create a properly supportive financial and policy space for the growth of such businesses.. Structural changes in government policies, financing instruments, and in some cases legal instruments are required for rewilding businesses to succeed and generate significant impact. The businesses detailed in Part B should be viewed as examples of rewilding business models that could be scaled up and replicated in other places.

Below we present a few initiatives which demonstrate how the activities of individual entrepreneurs are part of a broader development of financing for nature conservation and restoration. .

### **Bankable nature solutions, WWF**

In 2020, The World Wildlife Fund's Bankable Nature Solutions report outlined how restoring ecosystems and combatting climate change can attract investment from financial institutions. The examples presented in the report all generate a financial return and have a positive impact on nature, climate and communities. To attract interest from investors, they exhibited a combination of characteristics, "such as cashflow generating activities, sufficient collateral, a high probability of success, a clear exit strategy, an acceptable risk-adjusted rate of return and/ or a clear proof of concept and proven track record".

The report sets out a number of instruments and finance mechanisms for governments and financial institutions to invest in a greener world. The report promotes a landscape approach, looking beyond individual projects. This approach combines conservation, sustainable land use and landscape restoration with subsistence and commercial activities. Four investment themes are identified, including climate smart agriculture, environmental protection, water and sanitation, and forestry,

Investments include half a million US Dollar invested in a UK water utility bond for improvement of a water recycling centre and to create a natural wetland to improve water quality in a river in Norfolk. They also include 300 million invested in rubber plantations, combined with conservation and livelihood programmes, financed with a combination of public and private money via equity, bonds and a grant.

It is estimated that a total of 300 to 400 billion US dollars is required yearly to preserve and restore ecosystems around the globe. In many cases, especially in countries that score lower on the "ease of doing business", a combination of public and private funding is required to make the project bankable.

These examples show that it is possible to turn nature restoration into viable investment options. This can directly improve the position of individual businesses, e.g. where investments create healthier landscapes, soils and water, or where financial mechanisms are created that are available for individual entrepreneurs. It also proves to the broader financial sector that investments in nature and biodiversity are rewarding, which also impacts the bankability of individual rewilding enterprises <sup>8</sup>.

### **Attracting private investments for sustainable landscapes**

In 2022, WWF and IDH have jointly created a guide for projects that support biodiversity, sustainable land management, and climate change adaptation and/or mitigation. The guide focuses on designing investments in landscape finance projects where investment opportunities in companies or projects have (the potential for) a bankable business case. It offers guidance and a framework for designing landscape finance projects and investment proposals that consider the needs of investors, especially when these projects are still in an early stage of development.

### **Partnership for Biodiversity Accounting Financials**

A collaboration of financial institutions, the Partnership for Biodiversity Accounting Financials (PBAF)<sup>9</sup> is working towards a harmonised biodiversity accounting metric for the financial sector. They have explored

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<sup>8</sup> For the guide to attract private investments for sustainable landscapes view: [https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf\\_idh\\_toolkit\\_final.pdf](https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_idh_toolkit_final.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Founders are ASN Bank, ACTIAM, FMO, Robeco, Triodos Bank and Triple Jump. In November 2021, 27 financial institutions in 7 different countries are involved. For more information see [www.pbafglobal.com](http://www.pbafglobal.com)

the opportunities and threats associated with the positive and negative impacts on biodiversity of their loans and investments and are working towards a "biodiversity neutral" portfolio.

PBAF is not the only initiative in the financial sector addressing such issues. Other examples are the European Align project<sup>10</sup>, the Taskforce for Nature related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)<sup>11</sup>, and the Finance for Biodiversity Pledge<sup>12</sup>.

The fact that financial institutions are taking biodiversity seriously will benefit individual entrepreneurs. The fact that biodiversity is a topical issue within the financial sector makes it easier to discuss rewilding-related business with banks when looking for a loan. Additionally, many financial institutions have activities with a negative environmental impact within their portfolio - these have to be balanced with net-beneficial activities such as tree planting or peatland restoration,, which can be offered by rewilding businesses.

### **Nature Based Economies in Britain – Rewilding Britain and Conservation Capital<sup>13</sup>**

Rewilding Britain states that national, devolved and local governments have a significant role to play in the development of nature-based economies. These governments can directly and indirectly help to open up new funding streams, increase investment in training and education, and set and enforce environmental regulations.

“A major limiting factor in the applicability of financing mechanisms to local NBE models is the transaction cost of financing small and medium-sized businesses, and the typically short investment timescales of most funders. Most available environmentally-focused finance (for now at least) tends to flow into larger businesses and infrastructure projects such as renewable energy. We therefore need new and different mechanisms which fit the profile of the kind of businesses which will typically be present in local NBE area contexts.”

The report also provides an overview of some of the financial instruments available to governments and financial institutions to help catalyse and sustain local nature-based economies. These include direct nature fees, green taxes, grant funding, impacting investing, payment for ecosystem services, "green" and "blue" bonds, crowdfunding, grant-capitalised incubators, and buy-out funds. This shows the range of financial mechanisms available to governments to stimulate nature-based economies and rewilding businesses.

In addition, the report includes a range of recommendations to governments to improve the ecosystem for nature-based economies, and to stimulate the creation of more rewilding businesses, i.e. the creation of integrated land and marine land use plans, diversifying public, private and community ownership models within such economies (a good example is Scotland's Community Right to Buy model), reorienting public funding, and encouraging private capital investments .

### **GrazeLIFE recommendations to the EU<sup>14</sup>**

Carried out at the request of the European Commission, the "GrazeLIFE" project (2019-2021) analysed grazing by domestic and wild/semi-wild herbivores in European landscapes. The aim was to identify the most effective (and cost effective) means of maximising catastrophic wildfire prevention, climate adaptation and the provision of other ecosystem services, conserving and enhancing wild nature, and minimising human-wildlife conflict, through the maintenance of stable and resilient ecosystems.

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<sup>10</sup> [www.alignccus.eu](http://www.alignccus.eu)

<sup>11</sup> [tnfd.global](http://tnfd.global)

<sup>12</sup> [www.financeforbiodiversity.org](http://www.financeforbiodiversity.org)

<sup>13</sup> Rewilding and the rural economy, October 2021

<sup>14</sup> <https://grazelife.com/publications>

The study showed that extensive or natural grazing is a very efficient and effective mechanism for delivering many of these objectives, comparing well with other (more highly subsidised) forms of land use. However, it remains poorly supported from a financial, legal and political perspective, compared to other land management options such as mowing or ploughing grassland.

“Compared with more intensive forms of production, extensive grazing can become more economically competitive if the social and health costs of intensive agriculture (such as the influence of pesticides on soil and water, nitrogen emissions, loss of biodiversity, environmental impact of raw materials from other parts of the world, etc) are internalized in the agricultural economy and if subsidies are better used to reduce social costs”<sup>15</sup>.

Based on the study, a range of recommendations<sup>16</sup> were produced for grazing practitioners, local and national governments, and the EU. EU policy recommendations were aimed at adapting relevant policies, legislation and subsidies in such a way that they contribute more to EU biodiversity targets, climate adaptation, catastrophic wildfire prevention, and other EU policy goals. Many recommendations were targeted specifically at the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy), the EU-wide policy for agriculture which accounts for 33% of the total yearly EU budget.

Despite all the improvements that still need to be made to EU policy and subsidies to better support and stimulate extensive grazing (and rewilding), the fact that the EU requested this study demonstrates that interest in rewilding is growing, including within the European Commission.

### **Rewilding Europe Capital: funding for rewilding enterprises**

Rewilding Europe Capital (REC)<sup>17</sup> is Europe’s first "rewilding enterprise" funding facility. It provides financial loans to new and existing rewilding-related business that catalyse, support and achieve positive environmental and socio-economic outcomes in Europe.

REC is working to build a business case for wild nature in Europe and was established to positively stimulate enterprise economies connected to natural landscapes and their wildlife. REC wants to demonstrate that the restoration of ecosystems in rural regions can be a viable way for economic development, able to generate new business opportunities, jobs and income for local communities.

The first phase of REC began in 2013. In the first few years the focus was on small businesses that were mainly operating in the nature tourism market. Loans of up to 80,000 euros were offered - with a total of 18 loans provided for 520,000 euros.

A significant step forward was taken in 2017 when Rewilding Europe signed an agreement with the European Investment Bank, through its Natural Capital Financing Facility, for a new loan facility of 6 million euros. This allowed the second phase of REC to be launched, enabling us to scale up to a maximum of 600,000 euros per loan. Rewilding Europe Capital continues to offer loans to medium and larger enterprises. For small businesses to expand or start new activities located in rewilding areas (e.g funding for new nature guide to start a company) and medium to large scale loans to pioneer new rewilding business models (e.g transforming a commercial forest into a more biodiverse one or recovering degraded peatlands and selling carbon credits as a result).

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.rewildingeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/grazelife-laymans-report>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.rewildingeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/grazelife-recommendations>

<sup>17</sup> <https://rewildingeurope.com/rewilding-europe-capital>

### 3 Rewilding enterprises: observations and lessons learned

Rewilding Europe is seeing a growing interest in rewilding business - from a diverse range of companies, nature organisations, green entrepreneurs, governments, financial institutions, investors and others. This is reflected in the growth of the European Rewilding Network, which at the end of 2021 comprised 76 rewilding initiatives across 27 European countries, accounting for around 5 million hectares of land. Outside of the network there are also a burgeoning number of nature-based businesses - although these are not focused on rewilding specifically, they incorporate biodiversity and nature conservation into their business.

In Part B, we have summarised some of Europe's most inspiring rewilding and nature-based businesses. We have chosen businesses that have a proven track record and/or offer lessons that may assist others on their own journey.

In this section, we present overall observations and highlight general trends as well as differences and similarities between different cases and circumstances.

#### Different types of initiatives

Rewilding businesses come in many shapes and sizes. As illustrated in part B which covers a wide range of initiatives, from private estates to government concessions and from community initiatives to payback schemes.

These initiatives include private estates that have been owned by the same family for generations (Knepp, Wild Ken Hill), new estates that have been acquired especially for the purpose of rewilding (Bunloit Estate), a company that leases land management rights from local communities (Rio Maças), and local communities that have recently bought surrounding land (Langholm initiative). In terms of payback schemes, examples include companies that give back to nature (Rewilding Europe Travel), SKUA Nature, Support Nature) and NGOs that have developed schemes in which entrepreneurs participate or which targets users of nature areas directly (Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug). There are also two examples where governments offer concessions to private companies to exploit resources in an area, including nature conservation or development of new nature (Maasvallei, Secovlje Salina) and one example of a government-owned community forest (Lubeck).

The rewilding activities also vary considerably as do the level of human intervention and revenue mechanisms. The private estates can be characterised on a scale ranging from very extensive agriculture with high nature values to nature areas with very extensive grazing. In most cases, some extraction of raw material (e.g. Lubeck) or wildlife (e.g. Knepp) is still taking place. Different types of income generating sources are applied, including tourism, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, resource extraction (salt, gravel/sand), sports, local produce, wildlife photography and carbon offsetting, with many businesses targeting a variety of revenue streams.

The opportunities to contribute to nature while generating profit are manifold. Rewilding business cases can take many forms, which means there is likely to be an opportunity within your own business or organisation.

#### Private, public and leased estates and forests

##### Private estates: starting point and size matter

For private estates, the scale of investment differs (significantly) according to whether land needs to be acquired. Land acquisition prices can be a decisive factor in the success or failure of a business. Countries and regions where land prices are moderate - e.g. in areas where there is lower population density and lower competitive land use, such as the north of Sweden or Finland - are likely to have a lower barrier to entry,

compared with the more expensive, densely populated, intensively used areas, such as in the south of England or the Netherlands<sup>18</sup>. It is important to consider if purchase of the land is required, or if there are other mechanisms to secure the rights required e.g. lease or stewardship agreements.

Permanently rewilding agricultural land can see land value drop. In such cases, it is important that landowners are compensated in some way.

While it is more difficult for rewilding businesses to be viable on small plots of land, we still encourage rewilding at all scales, all the way down to back gardens and hedgerows. However, Rewilding Europe principally focuses on rewilding large landscapes that are preferably over 1000 hectares (particularly from an enterprise perspective). The examples outlined in part B are generally larger in size.

When using the examples listed in Part B as inspiration for developing your own rewilding business plans, it is important to not only consider the revenue streams involved, but to also take land acquisition and estate sizes into account.

### **Multiple income streams required**

Those owning or managing land often find it is necessary to develop multiple revenue streams in order to generate sufficient income in terms of breaking even and competing with previous land uses. A combination of, for example, forestry (e.g. removal of exotic species, close to nature timber extraction or cork harvesting), carbon sequestration, water retention, wildlife watching and grants can together generate a significant income per hectare.

What type of activities are feasible and how much income they can generate depends on many variables, including the location of the land, nature values including wildlife, size of the holdings, presence of real estate, ability to reach an (urban) leisure and tourism market, existing timber stock etc. National and local rules and regulations also play an important role in what activities are feasible (allowed).

Landowners / entrepreneurs need multiple skills to create successful multi-dimensional enterprises. They need to enjoy working in demanding environments and have sufficient understanding of various markets. Partnering with specialised businesses can be a good option in some cases, e.g. outsourcing web design, cooperating with established businesses for non-timber forest products and working with tourism businesses to create high-end experiences for niche markets (see the case of SKUA Nature).

Create diverse revenue streams from the same plot of land and cooperate with specialised businesses to reach out to the right market segments.

### **EU and other grants**

Though the businesses outlined in this report generate substantial income from private markets, subsidies and grants are still an important component of the natural area revenue stream. This is obviously also the case for land managers in other sectors, such as agriculture. Farmland is generally awarded higher grants per hectare compared to natural areas. Landowners can earn between 200 to 1000 euros per hectare for agricultural land.<sup>19</sup> Subsidies are nevertheless also relevant for most rewilding estates, especially those which have kept their agricultural status (e.g. Thurengeti/Crawinkel).

Applying for subsidies and grants can help to make your business case viable.

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<sup>18</sup> At the same time, population density can also be success factor, e.g for direct sales of meat or other produce to nearby customers (e.g. Knepp estate – see also section on “income from tourism and visitors”).

<sup>19</sup> For more in dept information on the subject of EU policies and subsidies, please view the GrazeLife report that is also cited in Chapter 3. [grazelife.com/publications](http://grazelife.com/publications)



## Leadership and endurance

Successes in rewilding businesses are to a large extent due to the vision and leadership of a person or group of persons that have a long-term commitment to the initiative. Leadership, a strong entrepreneurial spirit, flexibility and endurance are all required. As a rule of thumb, it takes five to ten years to build up a successful business, years of hard work on a daily basis. This is true not only for rewilding businesses, but basically for any business that is starting up.

To start a rewilding business it takes a visionary entrepreneur who is willing to work hard and is dedicated to making the business a success.

## Let the trees do the work

In some estates and forests 'close to nature' or 'near-natural forest use' is deployed where the land does the work and there is a reduced labour requirement. As the maintenance costs are very low, this can be interesting as an alternative land use model. This is convincingly shown by the example of the Lubeck Forest in Germany, where the practice of clear cutting has been abandoned and only the most valuable trees are extracted, leading to lower costs and a higher net gain per hectare, both for biodiversity and in financial terms.

Rewilding management can increase profits by reducing costs of management.

## Income from visitors and tourism

Tourism development is often an obvious choice when considering sources of income from rewilding. A common issue in this type of business is strong supply oriented development: i.e. build a beautiful, high quality or otherwise nature based product and the tourists will come, without sufficient investment in attracting the right target groups and organisations. Generating income from visitors can, however, only be successful if the entrepreneurs is able to successfully reach out to a market that suits the product. It is therefore wise to let the product development and market exploration go hand in hand. Finding the right target group is naturally a key to the success or failure of the business.

A remote location - such as Ultima Frontera in the Danube Delta - can be exploited successfully because it targets a very specific niche market (high-end, semi-professional nature photographers). These photographers are offered the opportunity to take stunning, high-quality photos of relatively rare animals. The photographers stay for multiple days, there are no other attractions in the surrounding area, and the rest of the tourism product (e.g. accommodation, food) is of a sufficiently high standard. Knepp Estate, on the other hand, is conveniently located in the urbanised south of England and therefore accessible to large numbers of people - it can therefore offer a very different product to a broader market.

When including tourism as part of your business plan, start thinking from the visitors' perspective when creating your product. Effectively targeting a niche market can help in the creation of a viable business. Tourism business is a trade and it can be wise to cooperate with a specialised tourism entrepreneur to assure an effective targeting of the tourism market.

## Payback schemes

Payback schemes are created by companies or NGOs that do not own natural areas, but who are willing to contribute towards the conservation or restoration of the natural areas that they benefit from as part of their business. There is a direct relationship between products or services and natural areas in such schemes. The main types are visitor payback schemes and schemes that offer a return for the use of nature-based products and services.

We believe there is a need to transition to a new status quo where companies that benefit from nature reinvest back into that nature – either financially, or by other means (e.g. voluntary maintenance work, offering

services free of charge) – in such a way that the impact on nature is at least neutral, with preferably a net benefit.

### **Additional to other income, usually**

As a rule, the revenue streams generated from payback schemes are insufficient for rewilding areas / rewilding businesses to break even. They will be an addition to other, more substantial revenue streams. Nevertheless, if well organised, nature can generate a relatively steady and simple revenue for land users or managers. It can make sense to outsource the generation of income from payback schemes to a management company - this can potentially reduce the administrative burden and increase the revenue generated (e.g. the Support Nature Foundation in the Netherlands).

One exemption to the general rule, where a payback generates substantial income for an area is SKUA Nature in the Ultima Frontera Reserve in Romania. The income from wildlife photography hides is quite substantial, not only for SKUA itself as a tourism company, but also for the estate that gets a percentage for each visitor that comes in.

Consider partnering with a specialised foundation or management company to generate income from payback schemes.

### **The effect of volume**

High payback volumes per visitor are only possible for niche markets and specialised products. When targeting a more general market, it is more common to generate small amounts from large groups of visitors. One well-known example (which is discontinued) is the Lake District “opt out” scheme in the UK, where visitors to the cooperating businesses were charged one pound extra, which was then donated to the national park<sup>20</sup>.

Some good examples can be found in Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug, with the mountain bike scheme here being particularly successful, with tens of thousands of paying users paying a small fee (7.50 euros) per year to be allowed to use a highly attractive network of tracks. This shows that a lot of small contributions can add up to a substantial total amount (several hundred thousand euros). In this case, another contributory factor is also in place i.e. a direct relation between the use of the area and the payment made. It is important that visitors understand where the money goes and can see a direct relation with their reason for visiting the area: creating more and better nature.

It is important to realise that too much dependence on the income of such schemes can cause undesirable side effects if this means that visitor numbers continue to grow. It is crucial to have good visitor management in place and/or limit the number of visitors.

The main challenge of payback schemes is to develop an efficient organisation that is as simple as possible for all parties involved, with a minimum administrative burden, a minimum impact of visitors on nature and maximum transparency.

Make sure that the product is attractive with substantial added value for the users, and with a direct link between the use of the area and the payment.

### **Government concessions**

Two examples are included where businesses have purchased concessions from the government to allow the extraction of natural resources (gravel, salt), with the obligation for parallel investment in nature restoration.

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<sup>20</sup> It is called 'opt out' because the donation is charged as a rule, but since it is voluntary anybody that objects can choose not to pay.



## Knowing the opportunities

The examples show that such an approach can create substantial added value both for nature and for the enterprises involved. In the Maasvallei (NL), the creation of 1250 hectares of nature was paid for by gravel extraction activities. Such enterprises are not typically motivated to create nature, so it is essential that governments recognise the potential symbiosis between economic and ecological ambitions. Exchange of information between the economic and environmental departments within governmental organisations can bring such opportunities to light and ensure that they are managed effectively.

Know the value of your areas, both financially and from a nature-based perspective.

## Getting the figures right

If there is a potential to create added value for nature, the next question is the business case: what are the costs and benefits of a conventional approach, and how do they differ from the alternative with added value for nature. The benefits for the extraction companies involved are often quite high, which leaves ample financial room to create parallel societal benefits. And leaving behind a "rewilded" landscape after the extraction has finished is frequently cheaper than other options for creating that landscape.

In terms of the figures, it is crucial not only to look at the costs and benefits during the extraction/building phase, but also for the long-term management of the area after construction. In the case of Limburg, the creation of a large new natural area was financed by the extraction of gravel. Nature here is greatly appreciated by the local population and visitors, it reduces risks of flooding, and creates other societal benefits, as a study by the University of Hasselt shows. It would have been beneficial if a payback scheme had been created for the management of the area after extraction had finished, because none of the revenues generated are dedicated to nature management.

Commercial use often leaves ample room for a contribution to nature as well - companies will still make a substantial gain.

## Who does what (including procedure)

A key step is designing a good process with each partner assuming an appropriate role, and ultimately reaching a sound contract, which satisfies all parties and is reached in a reasonable period of time. Other considerations for the contract such as length of term, liability and terms of termination require important consideration.

It is important to recognise the different types of partners involved, usually governments, commercial entities and NGOs, and their subsequent roles. Roles may differ according to the situation, but in general, where the government is the concession holder it can facilitate the tender process. The commercial entities are often in a good position to execute the work in the field and if NGOs are involved, they can bring in key ecological knowledge, including knowledge on the management of the nature areas, and restoration of nature as a fully-fledged ambition.

Consequently, ambitions need to be translated into tenders and contracts. It requires specialised knowledge of both procurement rules and the translation of ambitions into clear and measurable measurements and goals in order to ensure that aims are realised. Ecological support and supervision during the execution phase should be organised (e.g. by involving nature-focused NGOs), and the whole project should be monitored by an independent body so that impacts can be measured.

Involve the right expertise and design a good process to ensure that each partner does the right thing and that desired outcomes are realised.

## Carbon offsetting

Carbon offsetting is a very topical issue. Many estate owners and NGOs are looking into the possibility of using carbon offsetting as a means of generating income from the enhancement of natural areas. We present a concise overview in relation to rewilding.

### Carbon offsetting with nature: voluntary market

The voluntary carbon market is made up of companies and individuals who aim to offset their carbon dioxide emissions on a voluntary basis. This is a different market than that involving carbon certifications, which is created and regulated with cap-and-trade schemes or reductions in national or international mandatory carbon emissions.

The idea of carbon credits is based on additional tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents which are sequestered in the landscape, or not released into the atmosphere as a result of specific actions taken e.g. planting trees, rewilding agricultural land, reflooding peatland areas, or halting the harvesting of natural forests. The carbon credits that are generated from this additionality can be sold on the voluntary carbon market, where companies who are choosing to offset their carbon footprint can purchase them <sup>21</sup>.

Within the voluntary market, there are two types of compensation mechanisms: certified carbon credits and "claims". A certified carbon credit is represented by an additional ton of CO<sub>2</sub> (equivalent to carbo-dioxins) that has been continuously sequestered within a credit scheme defined and verified by an independent body. The "claim" is a less formal mechanism where each additional unit of CO<sub>2</sub> is sequestered and monitored, but is not dependent on an external body.

Usually, the certified carbon market linked to nature-based solutions focuses on tree planting or deforestation reduction projects, with little attention to natural regeneration or rewilding; these schemes are mainly about carbon storage rather than nature and biodiversity. To date, there have been few certified voluntary carbon projects related to natural regeneration and rewilding. Emphasis has been on developing carbon credit projects where the land is cheapest, and on maximising the carbon additionality per hectare. A commonly used example to illustrate what this means is the creation of monoculture plantations where exotic fast growing trees (e.g. eucalyptus) are used to maximise the creation of carbon credits. These areas are deserts for biodiversity, they are competing with nature for land and can create real risks for the landscape and local communities e.g. from wildfires.

Rewilding Europe is, like some other organisations, working to drive the carbon market in a more nature-focused approach using the rewilding of a landscape to combine the benefits for nature, climate and local communities. This approach is supported by an increasing body of evidence that restoring complete ecosystems is much better for achieving biodiversity and climate goals, compared to singular activities such as 'just' the planting of trees<sup>22</sup>.

### ETS: Obligatory EU system

In the EU emission trading system (ETS), large companies are obliged to buy emission right for every ton of carbon that is emitted. When the system was introduced, every company received a number of emission rights and these rights are skimmed each year, so that total emissions will (in theory) decrease and reach 0 in the end. Rights can also be bought or kept for later use (which is called banking). Landbased credits are not included in this system.

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<sup>21</sup> For any company taking their environmental footprint seriously, minimising their footprint and hence also carbon emission is the first most crucial step. Carbon offsetting is meant only for the last remaining emissions that cannot be avoided.

<sup>22</sup> See for example: Restored wildlife populations could play a game-changing role stabilising our climate <https://rewildingeuropa.com/blog/restored-wildlife-populations-could-play-a-game-changing-role-stabilising-our-climate/>

## Why carbon is interesting from a rewilding perspective

Currently, carbon financing only plays a limited role in nature restoration in Europe. The potential, however, is significant, as the carbon market is growing rapidly and starting to reach considerable volumes. The mandatory ETS market is tens of billions of dollars, which could easily finance the complete nature restoration and management in the whole of Europe<sup>23</sup>.

Carbon is interesting for rewilding because it is one of the few finance mechanisms that can be applied to changes in land use and generating recurring revenue. Transition of land to nature (for example from drained peatland areas for agriculture to nature) can require a substantial investment (e.g. blocking drainage channels in peat areas or assisting natural regeneration of trees) and rewilding areas require ongoing management, even if the level is much lower than alternative land management practices. Carbon credits can be a means to finance this transition and cover ongoing management.

The carbon market is also one of the few markets where no a physical extraction or use of nature is involved, which means there can be reduced external pressures.

The carbon market is relatively well established with significant demand from large numbers of corporates and other organisations wanting to offset their footprint. It is much better understood, with more developer buyers, established demand and marketplace than other ecosystem service-related revenue streams. There is a growth in demand volumes and there is limited supply which also makes rewilding related carbon credits attractive.

### Biodiversity offsetting

Biodiversity offsetting is a compensation for the loss of biodiversity that is caused by economic activities. In many European countries, offsetting is already required for some businesses, for examples when building activities cause damage to nature areas. This concept, however, can also be applied more broadly by assessing the total biodiversity impact that a company causes within its supply chain.

This wider concept of voluntary biodiversity offsetting is still a pioneer market, which we envision to become more substantial within the next ten years. One of the issues is to find an effective method of calculating the biodiversity footprint of a company and then matching this to the biodiversity benefits that they would look to offset..

## Why rewilding is interesting from a carbon perspective

The majority of the carbon market to date has been focused on energy transition for example windmills, solar panels and electric cars. These carbon solutions have very limited co-benefits for biodiversity, other ecosystem services or local communities. They are relatively simple solutions that target the climate issue with potential that they are contributing to biodiversity loss and other negative impacts if not implemented correctly.

Carbon credits developed through nature restoration and rewilding are a different story. Nature can provide positive carbon impact alongside benefits for many other ecosystem services, including biodiversity, water, and derive benefits for local communities. Therefore, we believe that carbon credits can be used as one

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.msci.com/www/blog-posts/introducing-the-carbon-market/03227158119#:~:text=Some%20of%20the%20biggest%20such,a%20modest%20surge%20in%20volumes.>

revenue stream to bring more land under rewilding management and create better outcomes for nature, climate and local communities.

### **Suggested guidelines**

The carbon market is about the additional carbon sequestered (or avoided emission) that is created on a yearly basis. This can be achieved in different ways, for example by assisting natural regeneration or by rewetting degraded peatlands. This means that existing woodlands or healthy peatlands are largely excluded<sup>24</sup>, except if a substantial improvement in the management is achieved, such as lengthening the rotation cycle for wood extraction (e.g. from 20 to 40 years) or it can be proven that they are at risk of being deforested or converted to other land use, then avoided emissions can be claimed.

It requires a substantial amount of land (500 plus hectares) to make a certified voluntary carbon project feasible from a purely financial stand point due to the cost of restoration, certification and monitoring. Land owners that have less land can however opt for a cooperation ('grouped scheme agreement') to work in a joint project with surrounding landowners or those that operate in a similar ecosystem and are looking to take similar actions on their land.

When having to acquire the land, a carbon project will only be feasible if land prices are moderate. In other cases, carbon can be one of the types of income that can help build a feasible business case. In general terms, an estimated maximum revenue that can currently be achieved would be around 400 euros per hectare, which would be equivalent to ten tons of carbon sequestration (per year)/ emission reduction, sold at a price of 40 euros per ton. This would require peat restoration or a highly productive forest. Generally speaking it will be lower, depending on the actions taken and the price at which the credits can be sold. As prices will change, it is good to regularly check the market situation.

Carbon can be an interesting source of income for rewilding businesses.

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<sup>24</sup> The REDD PLUS has introduced a carbon system intended for better protection of rain forests

# PART B – Best practice examples of pioneers in rewilding business

## Knepp Estate

Description	<p>Knepp Estate (over 1400 hectares / 14km<sup>2</sup>) has been owned by the Burrell family for over 220 years. Since 2001, the land – once intensively farmed - has been devoted to a pioneering rewilding project. Using grazing animals as the drivers of habitat creation, and with the restoration of dynamic, natural water courses, the project has seen extraordinary increases in wildlife.</p> <p>There is still food production on the Knepp estate, just in a less intensive way - producing organic, pasture-fed meat from free-roaming herds of animals within the Wildland project. The estate now also runs a nature-based tourism enterprise providing camping, glamping, and wildlife safaris.</p> <p>At its core, overlooking Knepp Lake, is a castle which is still occupied by the family.</p>
Type of initiative	Private Estate / Nature Tourism / Wild Meat
Initiator	Burrell family / Knepp estate
Contribution to nature conservation and climate change mitigation	<p>The vision of the Knepp Wildland Project was radically different to conventional nature conservation in that it is not driven by specific goals or target species. Instead, its driving principle is to establish a functioning ecosystem where nature is given as much freedom as possible. The aim is to show how a ‘process-led’ approach can be a highly effective, low-cost method of ecological restoration - suitable for failing or abandoned farmland - that can work to support established nature reserves and wildlife sites, helping to provide the webbing that will one day connect them together on a landscape scale.</p> <p>Extremely rare species like turtle doves, nightingales, peregrine falcons and purple emperor butterflies are now breeding here in high numbers; and populations of more common species are rocketing.</p>
Revenue streams and financial aspects	<p>The estate has been in the family for many years (no costs for land purchase). Revenue streams include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grants for environmental management: 10%</li> <li>• Basic payment scheme (phasing out): 8%</li> <li>• Renting out of office space, workshop spaces, etc (former stables): 26%</li> <li>• Letting of 7 houses: 5%</li> <li>• Meat sales: 14%</li> <li>• Tourism activities: 36%</li> </ul> <p>Employment has more than doubled on Knepp, with 23 full time equivalents when it was a working farm to a 49 under rewilding management.</p>

	<p>The team is continually growing. With employees spread across tourism, ecology, natural capital, stock management, meat processing and sales, and conventional estate management. The tourism business has 15 safari guides through the season.</p> <p>Number of livestock per hectare (Lu/ha) varies across the three rewilding blocks. The wildest, the Knepp Southern Block has a stocking density of around 0.25lu/ha including Old English Longhorn cattle, Red and Fallow deer, Exmoor Ponies and Tamworth pigs. This compares to a more typical density of 4lu/ha in a typical beef enterprise.</p>
Ownership	Private
Governance and actors involved	<p>The estate is run as a private business. The rewilding blocks are still stocking domestic livestock that are killed for meat, so is technically still a farm. The Estate therefore complies with all regulators and cross compliance across various agencies – The Environment Agency, Natural England, DEFRA and Knepp is Soil Association Organic certified so also complies with organic regulations.</p> <p>Buildings and renovations need to adhere to planning and use regulations. In short, the estate operates and trades as various enterprises within the regulatory frameworks under UK law.</p> <p>Environmental subsidies have supported the project in various capacities throughout. Natural England have administered a large portion of those funds, largely through Environmental Stewardship and now Countryside Stewardship schemes.</p>
Country / location	West Sussex, England, UK
Start date	2001
Ability to replicate / scale	Yes, very much so. Knepp has inspired an entire movement of larger estates shifting to an extensive rewilding system. Many of which aim to replicate a similar business model combining revenues from subsidies, tourism and ethical high value meat amongst other areas of income.
Steps	Stop farming. Secure funding. Wait. Go.
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staggered retreat from agriculture leads to greater heterogeneity</li> <li>• Delay grazing pressure for extended period (approx. 5 years) to allow vegetation pulse.</li> <li>• Monitoring and baselining key to success of any project.</li> <li>• Initial interventions to kick start the ecology of the system may be needed in even further degraded landscapes.</li> </ul>
Other	Natural Capital will shortly be replacing or accompanying the subsidy in this business model making this type of land use and system even more scalable through selling biodiversity uplift, carbon sequestration and other public goods provided by this sort of land use change and ecosystem restoration.
Sources	<p><a href="http://www.knepp.co.uk">www.knepp.co.uk</a></p> <p>webinar by Ivan Klee for Interreg Europe project on Wildlife Economies</p> <p>Personal contact</p>

## Agrar GmbH Crawinkel 'Thüringeti'

Description	<p>Agrar GmbH Crawinkel is a family-owned farm in Thüringen, in the eastern part of Germany. The farm started a few years after the unification of Germany as a traditional dairy farm, then the family shifted to extensive organic farming in 2002, after the opening of an EU co-financed grant scheme for farming with nature in Thüringen. The farm was organically certified in 2004.</p> <p>The soil in the area is poor for traditional farming, with a very thin layer of soil on top in a hilly environment. As lease prices for the land are consequently rather low, it offers an excellent environment for the extensive farming model applied by the Bley family.</p> <p>The area is grazed by around 500 horses and 500 cattle. Biodiversity on the land is high, with particularly large numbers of meadow birds. Some of the valley slopes are covered with orchids, and another field houses among the largest variety of cicades in Europe. The estate also offers substantial carbon storage, but as certification is still difficult, the family does currently not pursue to transform this into credits. The farm offers safaris on the land for tourists and other visitors in horse drawn carriages, jeeps and an old school bus.</p> <p>The year-round extensive free-range keeping of cattle and horses offers a cost-effective alternative means to preserve the landscape. I (compared to other means of landscape preservation management). It also meets the requirements of nature conservation, soil and water protection as well as recreational use. The area is accessible for cyclists and hikers and Crawinkel offers different types of safaris.</p> <p>A special element in the activity-mix and income are the 'free range' dressage and sport horses that live in the wild. On a yearly basis, around 100 horses are sold at a special auction.</p>
Type of initiative	Private company, land lease
Initiator	Farmer / entrepreneur
Contribution to nature conservation and climate change mitigation	<p>Included in the grazing are mountain meadows, wet meadows, semi-dry grasslands and large hedge landscapes around Crawinkel. A large part of the farm areas of Agrar GmbH Crawinkel is part of nature conservation and meadow breeding areas. With the sustainable management of a natural area that is sensitive from a nature conservation point of view, the farm makes an important contribution to the preservation of a large variety of biotopes and protected species.</p> <p>The grazing animals develop a behaviour comparable to that of wild herd animals, undertake long hikes every day and make use of the different local and seasonal food supply depending on the animal species. Cattle and horses complement each other and provide both short grazing lawns and grazing remains in the form of tall perennials, which have a structure-forming effect on the pastures.</p> <p>Wild animals such as deer, roe deer and wild boar quickly get used to the predictable migration and grazing habits of year-round grazers, jump easily into the low-fenced paddocks or crawl under the electric fence and benefit in the long term from grassland maintenance, which they would not "create" themselves.</p>



	The diversification of the landscape has amongst others attracted meadow birds, very rare mushrooms and special types of insects.
Revenue streams and financial aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company size app. 2500 ha, staff of 16 people.</li> <li>• Lease prices between 25 and 150 euros per hectare.</li> <li>• 500 horses (sports horses and Koniks), 500 suckler cows (Angus) and some water buffaloes (about 20). 10 donkeys.</li> <li>• Very low investment level</li> <li>• Each year, horses are sold in an auction, the sports horses for substantial prices.</li> <li>• A small part of the cattle is sold to private persons for meat. Most of the young cattle are sold to other companies for further breeding.</li> <li>• Income about 65% subsidies, 30% from sales of cattle and horses (about 50-50) and 5% from other sources (ao. safaris). Plans for a large (75 ha) solar power lease on own land.</li> </ul> <p>[In absolute numbers, the subsidies are similar to those in regular farms.]</p>
Ownership	Private company, lease of the land from a large group of local owners (heritage of communal ownership of the land in the former DDR)
Governance and actors involved	Private company, close contacts with government of Thuringen
Country / location	Germany
Start date	2002
Ability to replicate / scale	<p>Replication in the immediate surroundings is possible only on the poorer lands (due to land prices), where the local communities are in favour of extensive organic farming.</p> <p>The model can be interesting for other parts of Europe where land prices are relatively low.</p>
Sources	Study visit Wildlife Economies / Interreg Europe, information from the owner, <a href="http://www.agrar-crawinkel.de">www.agrar-crawinkel.de</a>

### Highlands Rewilding Ltd.

Description	<p>The 511-hectare Bunloit estate on the shores of Loch Ness in Scotland is operated by Highlands Rewilding Ltd, a company founded by eco-entrepreneur Jeremy Leggett. Habitat types include grasslands, peatlands, heathlands and scrub as well as both native broadleaf woodlands and non-native conifer plantations. The estate has been managed over the past year as an open natural capital laboratory, aiming to create a beacon of hope in the ongoing dual challenges of climate change and the ecological emergency. The purpose of Highlands Rewilding Ltd is to enable nature recovery and community prosperity through rewilding.</p> <p>It has four goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningfully increase carbon sequestration - within the peatlands, grasslands and woodland areas (verifiable through accurate measuring &amp; monitoring).</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningfully increase biodiversity - through the ongoing creation and enhancement of native, biodiverse habitats (verifiable through accurate measuring &amp; monitoring).</li> <li>• Increase local employment - via creation of direct jobs on the estate and engagement of specialist contractors and trades.</li> <li>• Become sustainably profitable - developing natural capital and other income streams to create ethically profitable models.</li> </ul> <p>The Bunloit Rewilding project aims to help take rewilding in Scotland to landscape scale, and so involves a scaling mechanism. Highlands Rewilding Ltd, created in 2021, is the vehicle for this. This new, mass-ownership company will enjoy co-ownership by a broad base of shareholders. It has bought also 343 hectares of the 353-hectare Beldorney estate in Aberdeenshire, where pasture-dominated terrain is primed for fast nature recovery.</p> <p>Here, with the proceeds of a first capital raise, Highlands Rewilding will create an exemplar of nature-recovery land management, including the planting / regeneration of a “Forest of Hope” as a legacy of the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow.</p>
Type of initiative	Private estate
Initiator	Jeremy Leggett
Added value for nature	<p>The Bunloit Rewilding Project definition of rewilding is:</p> <p><i>“A progressive approach to nature conservation that revitalises forest, peatlands and pastures, providing space for wildlife and flora to flourish and communities to thrive.</i></p> <p><i>It creates a landscape that boosts biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and job creation for guardians of the expanding wildland, all at the same time.”</i></p> <p><i>Highlands Rewilding has released its first Natural Capital Report (downloadable from the website) to present research so far at Bunloit.</i></p> <p><b>Carbon</b></p> <p>One of the key findings of this report is that despite the estate storing over 1.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent within its natural systems, it is actually a net carbon source overall. This is due to the emissions from the degraded peatlands, previously planted with non-native monoculture plantations, out balancing the sequestration achieved by the woodlands &amp; grasslands. Plans are therefore to fell the plantations sitting atop the peat, increase diverse, native broadleaves elsewhere on the estate through planting &amp; natural regeneration, and restore the peatlands, so the estate will be on track to become a net carbon sink. It is calculated that a net 60,747 tCO<sub>2e</sub> can be saved over 100 years.</p> <p><b>Flora and fauna</b></p> <p>The estate is rich in fungi, flora and fauna, including some several rare and threatened species. The aim is to further improve the situation, amongst others in the grasslands.</p>
Financial aspects	The Bunloit and Beldorney estates were purchased by Solarsanctuary Ltd (the company created for buying land) with a combination of debt from a bondholder network investing in the project, a £0.5 M loan, and Jeremy Leggett’s post-tax proceeds following the sale of his international solar company, Solarcentury Ltd.

	<p>Following a fundraising round through equity investment (2022) from high-net-worth individuals, or “founding funders” £7.5 million was raised which has enabled Highlands Rewilding to buy 97% of Beldorney estate, and 2/3 of Bunloit Estate (and lease the remaining 1/3).</p> <p>As a next step, the initiators will allow “citizen rewilders” to invest smaller amounts through crowdfunding, thus addressing the land ownership inequality in Scotland. A crowdfund campaign to establish this mass ownership of the land is planned in the near future.</p> <p>Alongside natural capital credits corresponding to measurable increases in carbon sequestration and biodiversity, the main Highlands Rewilding revenue streams at Beldorney will include felling of monoculture plantations as an ecological imperative but also for income generation. The estate will then move to sustainable forestry, creating a diverse mixed woodland. Regenerative agriculture will be incorporated into the land to increase biodiversity &amp; carbon sequestration while sustainably producing. It also aims to become a premium venue for a manageable number of eco-tourists. Corporate retreaters will come on company sponsored retreats for hands-on experience of nature recovery. Finally, the plan is to build and sell a small number of timber eco-homes, ideally to estate workers.</p> <p>Highlands Rewilding Ltd will create as many jobs as cash flow allows. So far, it has 6 full time employees, 2 part time employees, 6 regular self-employed consultant staff members, 1 full time paid student placement. On top of these 15 regular members of staff, the company provides business to local ecologists and trades.</p>
Ownership	Private
Governance and actors involved	Jeremy Leggett is the founder and acting CEO of Highlands Rewilding Ltd. He is a minority shareholder of Highlands Rewilding Ltd, and reports to a board as acting CEO.
Country / location	Scotland
Start date	Bunloit Estate purchased in 2020, Bunloit Rewilding Ltd and Highlands Rewilding Ltd founded in 2021.
Ability to apply elsewhere	<p>The Bunloit Rewilding Project aims to become one of the most impactful accelerators of Nature-based Solutions in the world by 2026.</p> <p>By demonstrating how land can be managed better for people, nature, and planet and in an economically viable way, it hopes other landowners will embark on similar journeys. It also aims to inform Government policy, resulting in financial incentives to manage land for nature and climate, paving the way for more sustainable land management.</p> <p>Bunloit Rewilding research on natural capital verification science aims to investigate how best to define and quantify different types of natural capital credits. This could influence policy setting by government, easing the way for other landowners.</p>
Sources	<p><a href="http://www.bunloit.com">www.bunloit.com</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.bunloit.com/blog/natural-capital-report-2021">https://www.bunloit.com/blog/natural-capital-report-2021</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.highlandsrewilding.co.uk">www.highlandsrewilding.co.uk</a></p> <p>personal contact with the estate</p>

## SKUA Nature

Description	<p>SKUA nature develops wildlife watching hides for photographers. SKUA is an Italian based company, with experience across the globe in developing and operating hides. In addition, they also offer consultancy and advice on hide design and development.</p> <p><b>SKUA in Ultima Frontera</b></p> <p>The first areas outside of Italy where SKUA became active is Ultima Frontiera, a 1000- hectare nature area in the Romanian Danube Delta near the border with Ukraine. The area is an ancient fisheries farm from the communist era, which is surrounded by over 6000 km<sup>2</sup> the Natura 2000 / Man and Biosphere reserve Danube Delta. An investor bought the area and tried to develop it into a tourist attraction for fisheries. After this failed, a cooperation with SKUA was initiated. A small hotel for 14 guests (the maximum number of visitors per week) is located on the site, as well as 30 bird and wildlife watching hides. Rooms are fully booked one year in advance (open from March till October).</p> <p>There is a dedicated management in place, to ensure that wildlife is not disturbed by the guests and the surroundings of the hides remain safe and interesting for the wildlife. A team including a number of biologists / ornithologists instruct and guide the guests, monitoring of the use of the hides and of the wildlife.</p> <p><b>Other areas</b></p> <p>SKUA also operates hides in Spain, Latvia, Norway and Italy (where they started).</p> <p>SKUA takes a percentage of the total revenues, depending on how the activities are distributed between the partner and SKUA. Use of the hides can be exclusively by SKUA, or can be shared with local organisations. Bespoke agreements can be made with SKUA on almost all areas of hide development and operation.</p> <p><b>Target groups</b></p> <p>SKUA typically targets the ‘professional amateur’ photographer. It offers very high-class photography hides, in environments that are carefully managed as to assure the best quality experience and photographs are captured.</p>
Type of initiative	Bird watching, hotel overnight stays
Initiator	SKUA nature / Max Biasioli
Added value for nature	<p>Hide development offers income for nature from an alternative source, to help manage the larger nature area. This can make rewilding more attractive compared to other land uses. It can be a substitute for the income from hunting, for example.</p> <p>Locations of the hides are chosen carefully, so that they are integrated in the natural spatial behaviour of the specific animal that is targeted in a specific hide.</p> <p>Baiting of animals on a small scale is required to make the concept successful. The method used is compared to ‘giving candies’ / small snack as to illustrate that the baiting makes it attractive for the animals to visit the area in front of the hides, while at the same time keeping the need to continue natural nourishing behaviour.</p>

Financial aspects	<p><b>Ultima Frontera</b></p> <p>A week stay costs around 2000 euros.</p> <p>The estate provides 10 full time jobs, has very good financial results both for the hotel / estate owner and for SKUA, tourism and nature are well balanced and it provides an example of good practice and inspiration for other areas.</p> <p><b>Other areas</b></p> <p>Agreements on what activities are carried out by local partners or by SKUA can be bespoke (e.g. investment in hide development, marketing, hide maintenance, reservation and administration, customer guidance). Division of revenues between SKUA and other partners (e.g. local land owner) will depend on this division.</p>
Ownership	Private
Governance and actors involved	There is always a cooperation or an agreement with a local service provider (e.g. hotel) and/or NGOs
Country / location	Italy, Romania, Spain, Norway, Latvia; Croatia as of 2022
Start date	2008 in Italy / 2012 in Romania
Ability to apply elsewhere	Yes
Sources	Study-visit to Danube Delta as part of the Interreg Europe Wildlife Economies project; personal contact with the owner; skuanature.com

## Wild Ken Hill

Description	<p>Ken Hill is a 4000 acres (around 1620 hectare) family-owned farm in west Norfolk, UK. Since 2018, the family have applied a different land management strategy, moving away from traditional arable farming to a threefold strategy of regenerative agriculture, rewilding and traditional conservation.</p> <p>Ken Hill is located at the intersection of several soil types and landscapes: undulating terrain with base-rich soils for arable farming, sandier soils, deciduous woodland, acid heathland, grazing meadows, freshwater marshes, and areas of coastal park. Regenerative agriculture is performed on land with high agricultural productivity, land that is better suited for carbon sequestration and ecological restoration is rewilded and traditional conservation techniques are used on features of existing wildlife interest. A quarter of the land is taken over by nature, with the reintroduction of species such as ponies, cattle, pigs and beavers to manage the landscape.</p> <p>The farm delivers healthy food, invests in improved soil fertility, carbon sequestration and biodiversity and offers access to nature for local population and schools. Around 500 acres (200 hectares) of freshwater marshes were rewetted (1 foot / 30 cm) which improved the opportunities for lapwing and other target species.</p> <p><i>“We are switching our farming operation to a regenerative model because we believe it is the right thing for the climate, biodiversity, quality of food, and the long-term sustainability of our farming business.</i></p>
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	<p><i>We aim to boost soil organic matter, increase fertility, and transition our farming operation into net carbon storage. We hope to provide greater public value with this approach, and ensure we can still farm here in 30, 50 and 100-years' time".</i></p> <p>Another reason for changing the strategy was to future-proof operations from Brexit (and the loss of CAP payments) and other commercial challenges.</p>
Type of initiative	Private estate
Initiator	Owner of Ken Hill (family run)
Added value for nature	<p>Reintroduction of species for management of the landscape in the wilder parts, return of target species like the lapwing, rewetting 500 acres (200 hectares) of freshwater marshes.</p> <p>The baseline ecological survey shows Wild Ken Hill is already home to 2,000+ species and a significant future increase is expected.</p>
Financial aspects	<p><i>"We are rewilding this land because it neither has high levels of agricultural productivity, nor currently provides other benefits to society. As land managers, rewilding provides better economics than arable farming, a divergence that will grow post-Brexit. Rewilding this land provides an opportunity to provide greater public goods, and redefine our business."</i></p> <p>The new model provides added value for the public, local communities, government and the landowners.</p> <p>Costs to yield harvest are much lower in the case of regenerative agriculture. For example, the farm owners calculated 40% lower costs for oil seed rape.</p> <p>Three years after the start of rewilding, revenues, profits and employment on the estate have increased. Wild Ken Hill's rewilding area comprises 500 acres of former farmland and 500 acres of woodland. Historically, the gross margin on the poor-quality farmland was £375 per hectare. Now it is £550 per hectare thanks to environmental subsidy payments from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS). The woodland, which generated very little income before, is also receiving money from the CSS.</p> <p>Wild Ken Hill has added one full time equivalent post since embarking on its rewilding project, recruiting a conservation leader. It now has six and half FTEs. Some of the jobs have evolved. As pheasants are no longer reared for shoots, a game keeper has adapted his skills to become a wildlife ranger.</p> <p>Volunteering has grown to ten people. Wild Ken Hill actively engages with its local community, hosting groups of children on up to 200 days a year and presenting to local churches and clubs. The interaction with the community has grown significantly since the project started.</p> <p>Wild Ken Hill also plans to develop nature-based tourism. The estate wants to offer camping and glamping, a visitor centre and a range of outdoor activities with a nature focus. Recently, it launched guided tours of the site. 800 tickets have been sold in 2021, with an average price of £35 per head. Wild Ken Hill has also arranged a number of bespoke visits for companies who pay to visit the estate.</p>

	The expected changes to CSS funding in future years will help to grow Wild Ken Hill's income. <i>"It will potentially double the size of the overall enterprise."</i>
Ownership	Private
Country / location	England
Start date	Land has been family owned for a long time. Wild Ken Hill project started in 2018
Ability to apply elsewhere	WKH wants to set an example of the potential of regenerative agriculture and rewilding as a viable business model. Scaling across lowland England is an explicit goal.
Sources	<a href="http://wildkenhill.co.uk">wildkenhill.co.uk</a> PowerPoint presentation on land-use model Wild Ken Hill Contact with the project manager

### Sociedade Agroflorestal do Rio Maçãs

Description	<p>Sociedade Agroflorestal do Rio Maçãs (SAFM) is a company that aims to secure and transition communal forests in northern Portugal into more natural forest habitats.</p> <p>It wants to diversify and promote native species forest management in Portugal. This should bring a financial return by allowing to blend sustainable forest harvesting with complementary commercial enterprises such as the provision of non-timber forest products, carbon offsetting, and nature-based tourism experiences.</p> <p>Many forests in Portugal, which are on rural communal land, are intensively managed to produce low-grade timber primarily in monoculture stands – mainly maritime pine and exotic pioneer species such as eucalyptus. Their development often results in clear-cut deforestation, creating contiguous forests of low biodiversity value. They are also increasingly vulnerable to large-scale wildfires, compared to the more open, mosaic landscapes of the past.</p>
Type of initiative	Transformation of communal forest into more natural woodland
Initiator	Private company
Added value for nature	More than 90% of the forest is located in an area of high conservation value around the Montesinho Natural Park and is classified as a Natura 2000 site. The forest will be transformed into a more natural woodland, thereby protecting and enhancing biodiversity and boosting its value in terms of ecosystem services and wildfire resistance.
Financial aspects	Local communities currently receive limited meaningful benefits from their forest areas under the management of the national forestry service. Under the proposed SAFM model, communities will benefit from forest and nature related revenue flows creating incentives for them to support the

	<p>natural forest management plan and transition, including lease payment and employment.</p> <p>For SAFM, income will be derived from sustainable timber extraction, extraction of non-timber forest products (ao. chestnuts), carbon offsetting, and nature-based tourism.</p> <p>The company received a € 600.000 loan from Rewilding Europe Capital in 2018 and term of eight years. In the first year, over 1100 hectares were secured, with another almost 2000 hectares secured in 2020.</p>
Ownership	Land is owned by local communities. The company leases them for terms of between 20 to 70 years.
Governance and actors involved	In 2021 the management team presented the Company business case to a Portuguese Family Office (managing an excess of 500M€ assets). A new company, owned by Teak Capital and the management team, was launched in June 2021. In 2022 Rio Maçãs was acquired and merged with Hakuturi. Presently, Hakuturi´s Rewilding component, including Rio Maçãs assets, values around 6,3M€ and manages over 3.500 ha of Forests.
Country / location	Portugal
Start date	2018
Ability to apply elsewhere	Yes, in areas with communal land ownership such as large areas of Portugal. There are approximately 400,000 ha of communal land in Portugal of which almost half are covered with forest plantations. The concept therefore has a great magnification potential
Lessons learned	Negotiations with local communities can be lengthy; it is crucial to have good local contacts and trust
Sources	Sociedade Agroflorestal do Rio Maçãs, Rewilding Europe

## Sustainable forestry, Lübeck

Description	<p>Lübeck forest is situated in the north of Germany near Hamburg. The about 5000-hectare large forest is owned by the city of Lubeck and has been covered with trees for over 250 years. Since 1994, there had been a change in the management of the forest, replacing the traditional management of logging with heavy machines and replanting to a new approach called ‘close to nature’ or ‘near-natural forest use’.</p> <p>The woods are managed by the city for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational use and nature education for the inhabitants of the city and for visitors from elsewhere</li> <li>• Commercial forestry through sustainable management</li> <li>• Enhancing biodiversity, Air cooling, water purification, air purification etc.</li> <li>• CO2 storage</li> </ul> <p>Management aims to minimise risks and optimise wood production (rather than maximising it). Only mature trees are harvested, as a rule using horses and leaving the remaining forest intact. Hence, the aim is not</p>
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	<p>to maximise forest yields, but to have a good balance between economic benefits and ecological needs.</p> <p>The approach also generates an attractive forest for recreation, with high social acceptance by environmental organisations and the 220.000 inhabitants of Lübeck. In 2017, two-thirds of respondents to a survey said they preferred the wilder forest look and feel to more orderly conventional forests.</p>																														
Type of initiative	Community forest																														
Initiator	City of Lübeck, chief forester																														
Added value for nature	<p>Trees in the forest are mainly beech and oak, mixed with ash, maple, hornbeam, elm, birch and alder, with some coniferous spruce, pine, larch and Douglas fir.</p> <p>No clearcuts, no use of toxins or fertilisers, no drainage of wetland, no interventions during spring and summer (breeding season), no use of large machines that damage the soil. Usually no plantation of new trees. For comparison of forest development, areas with a total of 471 hectares are left entirely untouched</p> <p>They protect wildlife trees and dead trees for birds, bats, insects and fungi, and are proud that their forests support otters, the endangered black stork, and 180 pairs of breeding middle-spotted woodpeckers, whose numbers have increased significantly in recent years.</p>																														
Financial aspects	<p>The wood offers employment to around 30 people (for ecological care but also for maintenance of recreational routes and facilities), the timber raises around 1,7 million euros per year (average 2015-2018).</p> <p>Guy Dauncey compares Lübeck to North Cowichan, a government owned forest in Canada of similar size.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>North Cowichan</th> <th>Lübeck</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>hectares of harvestable forest</td> <td>5000 ha</td> <td>4670 ha</td> </tr> <tr> <td>size of no-harvest reference forest</td> <td>0 ha</td> <td>471 ha</td> </tr> <tr> <td>total timber volume per hectare</td> <td>486 m3</td> <td>429 m3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>average annual allowable cut</td> <td>20000 m3</td> <td>14500 m3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>actual cut in 2017</td> <td>10585 m3</td> <td>14500 m3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>replanting (seedlings) 2017</td> <td>49000</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>average clearcut block size</td> <td>7 ha</td> <td>0 ha</td> </tr> <tr> <td>jobs created</td> <td>8,5</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income</td> <td>\$ 1.152.000</td> <td>\$ 1.900.000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		North Cowichan	Lübeck	hectares of harvestable forest	5000 ha	4670 ha	size of no-harvest reference forest	0 ha	471 ha	total timber volume per hectare	486 m3	429 m3	average annual allowable cut	20000 m3	14500 m3	actual cut in 2017	10585 m3	14500 m3	replanting (seedlings) 2017	49000	0	average clearcut block size	7 ha	0 ha	jobs created	8,5	30	Income	\$ 1.152.000	\$ 1.900.000
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Ownership	City of Lübeck																														



Country / location	Germany
Ability to apply elsewhere	Yes, the model has already been widely copied, amongst others by other German cities, including Berlin, Munich, Bonn, Saarbrücken, Wiesbaden, Hannover, Uelzen, Mühlheim an der Ruhr and Göttingen. Lubeck and its chief foresters have received several awards.
Sources	Guy Dauncey Yellow Point Ecological Society Blog <a href="https://yellowpointecologicalsociety.ca/2019/01/30/lubeck-another-way-of-logging/naturwald-akademie.org/en/forestry-2/">yellowpointecologicalsociety.ca/2019/01/30/lubeck-another-way-of-logging/naturwald-akademie.org/en/forestry-2/</a> Contact with Matthias Fischer, Naturwald Akademie

## Langholm initiative

Description	<p>The village of Langholm, a community led initiative, has recently bought part of the nature and moorlands in the surrounding area. In 2020, the Langholm Initiative has come to an agreement with Buccleuch Estates to buy 5,200 acres (c. 2100 hectares) of the Langholm Moor and Tarras Valley as well as six residential properties for £3.8m. The land was officially transferred to the community in March 2021. In 2022, a second round of fundraising brought together the funding to buy another 5,300 acres.</p> <p>The aim of the community is to help tackle climate change, restore nature at a huge scale and support community regeneration. The Langholm Initiative now has a team of staff in place to take forward the development of the reserve which includes creating a nature reserve management plan, planting a new woodland and developing an education and volunteering programme. The team is supported by volunteer board members and a separate committee to take responsibility for the nature reserve.</p>
Type of initiative	Community initiative
Initiator	Langholm initiative
Added value for nature	<p><b>Ecological Restoration</b></p> <p>Habitats within the reserve will be allowed and encouraged to regenerate naturally, and this process has already begun in some areas of the reserve. The aim is to plant new areas of native, broadleaf woodland, and allow the current woodland areas to recover along the river, creating a wilder landscape which will provide a rich mosaic of habitats to support a large range of wildlife and maximise biodiversity.</p> <p>A large group of volunteers is helping to make this happen.</p> <p><b>Environmental Education</b></p> <p>The initiative is working with classes from local primary schools on the reserve, and at sites around Langholm, doing activities such as den building, mini-beast hunts and fire building. An environmental education programme will be launched in 2022, to provide an opportunity for school groups and families to engage with and learn about the wildlife on the reserve.</p>

Financial aspects	<p>A huge fundraising campaign attracted £3.8m in 6 months' period, with a crowdfunding which raised over £200,000 in public donations as well as funding from Scottish Land Fund, South of Scotland Enterprise, John Muir Trust, Carman Family Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation and the Woodland Trust. This allowed the community to purchase 5,200 acres of the land. Another 2.2 million pounds were raised in 2022.</p> <p>According to the business plan, the nature reserve will boost local tourism, employment, training and housing opportunities for the local community. If development work is carried out, the plan says the land can generate a surplus of £1.29 million after 26 years; £1.05 million of this could be used to fund development itself, leaving an overall cash surplus of £292,000.</p> <p>Four new full-time and two part-time jobs have already been created since the moor came into community ownership</p>
Ownership	Community
Governance and actors involved	<p>The Langholm Initiative was formed in 1994 as a partnership between private and public sectors, in response to a post-industrial crisis.</p> <p>As one of south Scotland's earliest development trusts, it has led the way in facilitating projects that make a lasting difference to the area.</p>
Country / location	Scotland / UK
Start date	In May 2019, Buccleuch Estates <u>announced its decision to sell 25,000 acres of Langholm Moor and the Tarras Valley in its Borders Estate</u> . The first 5300 acres were transferred in March 2021.
Sources	<p><a href="http://www.langholminitiative.org.uk">www.langholminitiative.org.uk</a></p> <p>Rewilding and the rural economy, Rewilding Britain, 2021</p>

## Rewilding Europe Travel

Description	<p>European Safari Company (ESC) has been an initiative of Rewilding Europe and has transitioned to the private company Rewilding Europe Travel limited. It offers unique experiences that directly support wild nature and wildlife comeback in some of Europe's most special places. RET offers visits to places that often suffer from rural depopulation, land abandonment and economic downturn, where rewilding can breathe new life and prosperity into these landscapes. The company hand picks untouched nature-based experiences, hard to find or hear about to bring you the ultimate nature-based getaways.</p>
Type of initiative	Initiated by NGO, transitioned to private company
Initiator	Rewilding Europe Foundation (NGO)
Added value for nature	Travellers with Rewilding Europe Travel not only experience some of Europe's finest nature, but directly learn about and contribute to rewilding and support local communities. Dedicated levies from each booking support rewilding initiatives, while local nature-based businesses

	benefit from income, job creation and developmental support from Rewilding Europe.
Financial aspects	Income is on a commission basis, around 20% of revenues (roughly equals market average). Revenues of the ESC predecessor called Rewilding Europe Travel were in the range of EUR100-200k.
Ownership	Private by the 2 directors
Governance and actors involved	Private owned limited company. License agreement with Rewilding Europe Foundation.
Country / location	UK
Start date	European Safari Company established in 2017, transition to Rewilding Europe Travel during 2022.
Ability to apply elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5% on top of every booking is set aside as a ‘rewilding levy’ and contributed to the area visited.</li> <li>• Contributing to nature is definitely an aspect that can be copied by other travel organisations.</li> <li>• Model should be targeted to specific travel groups.</li> <li>• By becoming a member of the European Rewilding Network, the opportunity arises to become a Rewilding Europe Travel destination.</li> </ul>
Steps	
Lessons learned	Partnerships are key. Working with a variety of nature-based tourism entrepreneurs (guides, hotel owners, etc) in the different rewilding areas will increase the number of tourism products and thus the number of potential guests that can be targeted/ reached. It is also very important to set the right standards for all your partners: for example, are they practicing responsible wildlife watching.
Sources	<a href="https://www.rewildingeuropetravel.com/">https://www.rewildingeuropetravel.com/</a>

## NPUH Sustainable produce with payback for nature

Description	<p>Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug (NPUH) is a &gt; 10.000-hectare nature area to the east of the city of Utrecht in the Netherlands. Ownership of the area is in the hands of the state forestry service, two nature organisations (Natuurmonumenten and Utrechts Landschap - both NGO's) and a large number of private estate owners (land sizes ranging from 40 to 2000 hectares). The national park organisation (stichting NPUH / foundation) is a collaboration between owners, 8 municipalities and the province of Utrecht, with lots of other actors involved (tourism organisations, local nature organisations, entrepreneurs, active citizen groups).</p> <p>One of the challenges of the NPUH is to create a better balance between costs and benefits for the owners of nature areas. Currently, the costs for maintenance of nature and recreational facilities are carried by the owners, who do usually not benefit from the tourism and other revenue streams. Therefore, NPUH seeks to generate additional funding for land (nature area) owners. This is done by several means, targeting</p>
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	<p>governments, companies and nature users (recreation, water extraction companies, etc).</p> <p>Stichting NPUH facilitates in this, amongst others by involving entrepreneurs and promoting sustainable produce, with an extra levy (payback) for nature.</p> <p><b>Heuvelrug Blond beer</b></p> <p>The first product developed is a local organic beer called ‘Heuvelrug Blond’ that is brewed using the mineral water that is stored underneath the NPUH nature area. For each litre sold, a percentage is transferred to the NPUH by the brewer. A special giftpack was developed with an additional levy. The beer is sold in giftshops in the area and in hotels and restaurants frequented by visitors. Serving the beer is a means for the tourism entrepreneurs to give back to nature in a way that is attractive for them as well. The brewery takes care of the marketing and distribution as part of their general operations. The brewery (with sustainable and carbon neutral production) is a larger one among the micro-breweries, with sufficient size and market outreach to generate some volume.</p> <p><b>Cheese, sausages, tea, mushrooms, lowers and wool</b></p> <p>In a second phase, the product line has been expanded with six additional products. These are all regionally produced, organic or otherwise sustainable, and sold at location and through the webshop of the individual producers. Scaling up and distribution to other sales locations are the next step to generate more volume for these products.</p>
Type of initiative	NGO / cooperative
Initiator	Foundation Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug
Added value for nature	Organic produce, local production, positive attention for nature conservation
Financial aspects	<p>In the first year, over 2000 euro was generated through the sales of Heuvelrug Blond beer.</p> <p>For the other products, 10% of turnover is transferred to the NPUH for investments in nature. Absolute numbers are still very small.</p>
Ownership	Brand is owned by NPUH foundation, payback is agreed through a contract
Governance and actors involved	See above under ‘description’ for partners involved in NPUH; produce is the initiative of the NPUH foundation, in cooperation with local entrepreneurs
Country / location	Netherlands
Start date	2020 (beer) 2021 (other)
Ability to apply elsewhere	Possible. Presence of a substantial market (consumers) is helpful
Lessons learned	Cooperation with the regional tourism board to approach the tourism and hospitality sector has been helpful in promoting the beer.
Other	It is pertinent to use a simple administration system. Logistics (getting the product to the market) is often the most challenging. In most cases it is

	advisable to leave this in the hands of a professional and specialised commercial partner.
Sources	<a href="http://www.np-utrechtseheugelrug.nl/stichting-NPUH/streekproducten">www.np-utrechtseheugelrug.nl/stichting-NPUH/streekproducten</a> personal involvement

## Secovlje Salina nature park and salt planes, Slovenia

Description	<p>The Sečovlje Salt Pans are one of the last salt pans in the Mediterranean. It is about 60 hectares in size. A traditional nature- and human-friendly method of salt production is applied. The salt is obtained manually. This method has enabled the development of special living environment for all kinds of special species. Nature and man go hand in hand.</p> <p>The park has several visitor centres and touristic opportunities. The management of the park, including the salt extraction, visitor facilities and protection of the natural values is outsourced by the Slovenian government to the private company Soline d.o.o.</p> <p>The contract includes the right to use the area for traditional salt-making. It also includes the duty to maintain biodiversity, protection of natural asset and cultural heritage and to keep the salina ecosystem intact. The concessionaire also has the right to develop tourist activities, for letting of quays and growing of water organisms (mariculture).</p> <p>The company is obliged to develop ten-year management plans in cooperation with the Slovenian Institute for Nature Conservation. Draft plans should be presented to the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park's Committee and the Ministry of the Environment, and should be approved by the Government. There is an obligation to develop yearly implementation plans and to regularly report to the Slovenian government.</p> <p>The contract also stipulates the sources of financing the managing of the Park, i.e.: funds from the national budget, income from the sale of goods and concessionaire's services in that particular part of its activities that is implemented as a public service, entry fees for the visit of the Park, donations, grants and other non-refundable funds, other sources such as parking fees, etc.</p>
Type of initiative	Government concession
Initiator	Government of Slovenia
Added value for nature	<p>The saline habitat is a heaven for birds. Different biotopes have formed in the channels and pans. So far 296 species have been counted. Examples include the South European toothcarp and large red coloured brine shrimp.</p> <p>The whole area of the park is of ecological importance/ Natura 2000 area (SPA) for 130 bird species/ Natura 2000 area (SCI) for 4 animal species and 6 habitat types.</p>
Financial aspects	For the concession granted for the period of 20 years, with a possibility to have it extended for 10 years, the concessionaire will pay a concession duty once a year, which will amount to 100,000 dollars in the first year, and 1% of the income from the previous year. The payment for the concession will be divided between the state and the council, in the area of

	<p>which the natural asset is located, in equal shares of the entire concession payment.</p> <p>Within the framework of the natural asset use for the implementation of traditional salt-making, the concessionaire can obtain up to 20,000 tons of salt, up to 400 m<sup>3</sup> of salina mud (fango), and up to 1,000 m<sup>3</sup> of mother water. In connection with it, however, the concessionaire is obliged to maintain and restore the facilities for the production of salt in traditional manner.</p>
Ownership	National government / concession to private company
Governance and actors involved	Concession to private company, issued by National government. Part of the income is transferred to local government
Country / location	Slovenia
Start date	1990 Piran Municipality, 2001 Republic of Slovenia
Ability to apply elsewhere	Yes, for regions where nature areas offer commercial opportunities and are in the hands of governments or local communities.
Sources	<p><a href="https://www.kpss.si/en/">https://www.kpss.si/en/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.naravniparkislovenije.si/en/nature-parks/secovlje-salina-nature-park">https://www.naravniparkislovenije.si/en/nature-parks/secovlje-salina-nature-park</a></p>

### Rivierpark Maasvallei: Grensmaas project

Description	<p>Along the river Meusse, governments, private sector and nature organisations in both Belgium (Flanders/Limburg) and the Netherlands (Limburg) have been cooperating for 25 years to improve water safety and develop nature.</p> <p>The floodings of the Meusse in 1993 gave rise to the start of this initiative. In 1994, an agreement was signed between Flanders and the Netherlands to improve the water safety along a stretch of 40 kilometres.</p> <p>On the Dutch side, a consortium has been created (“Consortium Grensmaas”, consisting of gravel extraction companies, constructors and a nature organisation) that takes care of the water safety measures, nature development and creation of recreational facilities. These measures are paid for by the extraction of around 54 million tons of gravel and 10 million tons of sand. The consortium is contracted by the national government that oversees the realisation of the project goals and the societal goals.</p> <p>On the Flemish side, the Grensmaasproject was also considered a strategic project for both protection against high water and for nature development. In the course of the years, focus shifted from strengthening the dykes and water drainage to water storage. Recreation, landscape and agriculture became increasingly important as part of the plans. The functioning of the river was improved by creating a more natural dynamic ecological structure: wilder nature and special landscapes. Previous gravel extraction sites were redeveloped into nature and recreation areas, and a network of hiking and cycling networks have been created in the area. Measures have been carried out in the period 1997-2016.</p>
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Type of initiative	Government concession
Initiator	Government (water safety) and ngo's (nature development)
Added value for nature	<p>The investments in nature development have led to an increase in the number and surface of nature areas. In total, an additional 3500 hectares of nature will be created in the area, of which 1250 ha through the Grensmaas Project.</p> <p>The areas are managed to give way to natural processes through year-round grazing wherever possible. River dynamics and spontaneous vegetation development are of great importance for biodiversity and landscape development.</p>
Financial aspects	<p>Costs on the Dutch side are around 700 million euros, largely covered by the yield of gravel and sand. The likelihood of flooding is decreased by a factor 5, which means that tens of thousands of households are better protected.</p> <p>A study was carried out to assess the economic value of the benefits of the total of measures taken in the period 1997-2016. The study economically values increased carbon sequestration, increased flood protection, avoided operational costs for drinking water purification and increased recreation opportunities.</p> <p>The costs for developing and maintaining the (facilities in the) river park are € 610.000 per year. These costs have been taken into account, as have the loss of added value true a decrease in agricultural land (of around 1200 hectares).</p> <p>Taken both the costs and benefits into account, the total yearly economic value of the measures taken adds up to between 19 and 24 million euros, of which the bulk is related to recreation and tourism.</p>
Ownership	Public-private cooperative
Governance and actors involved	Cross-border initiative of Flanders and the Netherlands, included national government (Rijkswaterstaat), Flanders government, provincial governments, gravel industry, nature organisations.
Country / location	Belgium / Netherlands
Start date	1994 (first ideas)
Ability to apply elsewhere	The combination of economic extraction of resources (in this case gravel), linked to nature restoration and development in combination with tourism and other ecosystem services, can be applied in many other regions.
Sources	<p><a href="http://www.ark.eu">www.ark.eu</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.grensmaas.nl">www.grensmaas.nl</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.grensmaas.nl">Grensmaas   Rijkswaterstaat</a> (<a href="http://www.rijkswaterstaat.nl/water/waterbeheer/bescherming-tegen-het-water/maatregelen-om-overstromingen-te-voorkomen/maaswerken/grensmaas">www.rijkswaterstaat.nl/water/waterbeheer/bescherming-tegen-het-water/maatregelen-om-overstromingen-te-voorkomen/maaswerken/grensmaas</a>)</p> <p><a href="https://www.rivierparkmaasvallei.eu">https://www.rivierparkmaasvallei.eu</a></p>



	De economische waardering van de maatschappelijke baten van de herinrichtingsmaatregelen van de Maasvallei, Universiteit Hasselt, 2018
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## Support nature

Description	<p>Support Nature is an online platform for the owners of nature areas. It generates support for nature and additional income and can help to improve visitor management and the offer of recreational services and facilities.</p> <p>The platform was primarily built for private nature estates in the Netherlands, that are generally freely open for visitors for hiking, and cycling, and where subsidies for maintenance of nature (rangers, supervision) and recreational facilities (paths, parking areas) are decreasing. This creates an increasing financial burden for the owners of the estates. Especially as visitor numbers are rising, the enthusiasm to allow hiking and cycling in some estates is decreasing.</p> <p>In terms of size, estates are roughly between 40 and 2500 hectares, with many being a couple of hundred hectares in size. Some are managed entirely by the family, others have personnel or hire stewards for the day-to-day management.</p> <p>Support Nature offers these estates, as well as other owners of nature areas, the opportunity to raise funds through micropayments and -donations of visitors in a cost-efficient way. This means that visitors can pay a few euros each using a technology platform, without the need for personnel on the spot. In addition, Support Nature serves as a communications channel towards visitors (newsletters, social media). Apart from the digital platform, there are also panels on site (using QR codes) that offer information on the natural values and the estate.</p> <p>Payments can be made obligatory or can be voluntary, and can vary according to the type of use (general entrance fee, parking, mountain biking, horse riding, accommodation, etc). There is a possibility to send visitors additional information (e.g. a hiking map) upon payment. All net income is invested back into conservation of the estates.</p> <p>The digital platform helps to measure results and is very flexible. Various models can be tested, including different price ranges, and can be adapted based on the data.</p>
Type of initiative	Private initiative, social enterprise
Initiator	Jan Derck van Karnebeek, owner of a private estate
Added value for nature	<p>By showing people that nature is not 'free', they will start valuing it more. The platform offers the opportunity to communicate with visitors (and also non-visitors), which can enhance the understanding and hence the commitment of people to the nature areas. The additional income that is generated for preservation of nature will help to keep the estates healthy.</p> <p>The data gathered through the system can help the estate owners to enhance the management of the estate.</p>
Financial aspects	All net income is invested back into the estates. 10% of the fees is used to keep the system running.



	<p>The initial platform is built with private investments (€ 50.000).</p> <p>The first tests show that voluntary payments are on average around 1 euro per visitor.</p> <p>Estates that are interested to join can freely make use of the platform for 6 months, with monthly reports and payments. After six months, the estate pays €1800 entrance fee, and 10% of the net donations.</p>
Ownership	Foundation Support Nature owns the platform. The individual estate owners decide on the type of costs and the fee they want to introduce.
Governance and actors involved	Foundation, estate owners
Country / location	Netherlands, currently active on landgoed De Eese, landgoed Ampsen, Landgoed De Horsten and landgoed De Boom. Four other estates will join in the autumn of 2022.
Start date	2021
Ability to apply elsewhere	<p>Definitely. The aim is to create a strong basis for the system in the Netherlands, and when that is established, the initiators want to make it available for use in other European countries.</p> <p>Setting up a new system requires an initial investment and good contacts among private (and public) nature owners.</p>
Other	Investments were kept very low in the beginning, testing the system with a beta version using an existing platform. Only after the first positive results, money was invested in building a made-to-measure platform.
Sources	<p>Interview Jan Derck van Karnebeek</p> <p><a href="http://www.supportnature.nl">www.supportnature.nl</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.deeese.nl">www.deeese.nl</a></p>

### MTB trail network, Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug

Description	<p>In Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug a network of MTB trails has been developed in order to reduce off-track cycling. The initiative was taken by the MTB community, both in order to create an attractive cycling experience and to prevent a total ban on MTB use in the woods.</p> <p>Landowners and nature organisations have provided their cooperation to the plans and this has led to a decrease in off-track riding by 90% and hence ecological benefits compared to the previous unregulated situation. The tracks have been carefully planned, taking into account vulnerable ecological areas and other recreational uses.</p> <p>Parallel to the development of the tracks, a paid vignette was introduced. Because a group of 300 self-organised volunteers from the MTB community are helping to maintain the tracks, the price of the vignette can remain very modest: € 7,50 on a yearly basis. The vignettes are sold at local cycling shops and in bars and restaurants in the area as well as online. The trails are hugely popular which has led to a substantial income</p>
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	<p>from vignette sales. Administration and coordination are in the hands of the national park.</p> <p>A similar system has been introduced for horseback riding in the beginning of 2022.</p>
Type of initiative	Payback scheme / private initiative
Initiator	MTB riders
Added value for nature	<p>Since the introduction of the trail network, riding off road has decreased by 90%. The network has been constructed in a close cooperation between nature owners, conservationists and MTB, ensuring both the biking experience (prerequisite for the use of the network) and an acceptable situation from a biodiversity perspective. The trails have received several awards, amongst others for the ecological integration of the tracks.</p>
Financial aspects	<p>The vignette price is kept low in order to stimulate the purchase of the vignette. Regular control actions are carried out.</p> <p>As the use of the trails and the sale of vignettes has boosted, the income has become substantial, several hundred thousands of euros on a yearly basis.</p> <p>The income is used for the maintenance and construction of the system, owners that have trails on their property receive a compensation for their costs and the bulk of the money is used to finance special nature projects.</p>
Ownership	Landowners / nature organisations (tracks), national park (vignettes), MTB foundation (intellectual ownership)
Governance and actors involved	<p>Actors involved: Volunteers from the MTB community, Stichting MTB Heuvelrug, Staatsbosbeheer, Stichting Utrechts Landschap, several private owners, Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug</p> <p>The owners of the nature areas have given permission for the construction and use of the trail network and take care of the large-scale maintenance, the day-to-day management is in the hands of the MTB community, coordination and sales of the vignette are in the hands of the Nationaal Park.</p>
Country / location	Netherlands
Start date	2014-2016
Ability to apply elsewhere	Yes. It is very helpful if an active group of MTB volunteers are present
Sources	<p>Communication with NPUH Foundation</p> <p><a href="http://www.np-utrechtseheuvelrug.nl/activiteiten/mountainbiken">www.np-utrechtseheuvelrug.nl/activiteiten/mountainbiken</a></p> <p><a href="https://mtb-utrechtseheuvelrug.nl/mtbvignet">https://mtb-utrechtseheuvelrug.nl/mtbvignet</a></p>