

GoNaturePositive! launches with four days of important discussions exploring the nature-positive economy

The newly launched EU-funded project, [GoNaturePositive!](#), kicked off last week with a dynamic four-day programme focused on building a shared vision and fostering discussions on the nature-positive economy.

Day 1: Building a Common Vision (March 4th)

The opening day, hosted by Ian Brannigan and Helena Deane of the [Western Development Commission](#) at The Dean Hotel in Galway, centred on team building for the GoNaturePositive! consortium. Partners came together to co-create a shared vision based on their diverse objectives and strengths, fostering collaboration for the project's success.



Welcome at the Dean Hotel, Galway

Day 2: Building effective WP and cross-WP teams (March 5th)

Day two was held at the awe-inspiring [Marine Institute](#) in Galway. In the morning, Professor Joseph Bull of the University of Oxford offered an introduction to the concept of the nature-positive economy, sparking discussions on the possibilities for its definition. In the afternoon, we were treated to a dynamic range of speakers with a spotlight on the pilots, including talks from Rick Officer, CEO of the Marine Institute and Dr Eugene Farrell from the [University of Galway](#) discussing coastal resilience followed by a Panel discussion: Going nature positive in the blue economy with Máire Ní Enniú from [Udarás na Gaeltachta](#), Oliver Tully, [Cuan Beo](#) and Laura Dixon, [Climate Action Officer](#) representing the Mayo County Council

contributing. We ended the day with a site visit to [BIA](#) in Athenry, who are dedicated to transforming food chains towards Regenerative Agriculture.



Marine Institute, Galway



Marine Institute, Galway

Day 3: Public Launch “Go Nature Positive! Pathways and partnerships towards a nature-positive economy”(March 6th)



Isobel Fletcher, CEO Horizon Nua, Malcolm Noonan, Minister of State for Nature and Anabela Lança, Vale de Esteva - NBE in Portugal

Day 3 welcomed the hybrid public launch of GoNaturePositive! at Dublin’s Trinity Business School, with an engaging keynote address from special guest Malcolm Noonan, Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform, discussing Ireland’s vision and roadmap towards a nature-positive economy. While over 150 people joined online, Jane Stout, Vice President for Biodiversity & Climate Action and Chair of GoNaturePositive! Impact Board and Laurent Muzellec, Dean of Trinity Business School, welcomed a packed auditorium before John Bell, European Commission’s ‘Healthy Planet’ Director, took to the virtual stage to outline the strategic importance of GoNaturePositive! within the context of EC policy transitions on Climate Change, Bioeconomy, Food Systems, Environment, Biodiversity, Water, Circular Economy, Oceans and the European Green Deal.



From left to right: Prof. Laurent Muzellec, Prof. Mary-Lee Rohdes, Minister Malcolm Noonan, Dr. Dharm Kapletia, Dr. Siobhan McQuaid, and Prof. Jane Stout.

After, we were treated to a captivating introduction to GoNaturePositive! by Siobhan McQuaid of Trinity Business School, finishing with Joseph Bull, presenting current definitions of the nature-positive economy and posed challenging questions about what the nature-positive economy might mean for business and society. This was followed by a dynamic roundtable discussion with over 100 stakeholders representing diverse sectors, such as policy, civil society, businesses, and environmental NGOs. The discussion focused on exploring different perspectives on the nature-positive economy and fostering collaboration across sectors.

In the afternoon, nature-positive practitioners took to the stage to discuss industry trends and challenges as part of Nature Futures 2024. Moderated by Kieran Farrell of Horizon Nua, over 300 people registered online for this event featuring nature-based enterprises in:

- **Regenerative Tourism & the Blue Economy-** [Folef Hooft Graafland](#) of [Camping Ca Savio](#) in Italy and [Lorraine Gallagher](#) of [The Seaweed Company](#) in Ireland
- **Regenerative Agriculture & Forestry:** [Felix Riecken](#) from [Rieckens Landmilch](#) Farm in Germany & [Ciarán Fallon](#) of [The Nature Trust](#) in Ireland.
- **Green Buildings & Water Management:** [Paulo Palha](#) of [Neoturf](#) in Portugal

The context for industry trends was set by Oisín Klinkenbergh, who presented preliminary results from a survey of 100+ nature-based enterprises across Europe. This survey, undertaken as part of the [Invest4Nature project](#), highlighted that while demand for NBS continues to grow at an exponential rate, little is understood about the supply side of NBS and how this demand will be met.



Trinity Business School, Dublin

The day closed with three parallel sections, each dedicated to driving the transition towards a nature-positive economy:

Financing GoNaturePositive! explored the expansion of blended financing for Nature-based Solutions (NBS) with insights from leaders across sectors, including the EC, IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, EBRD, and various research institutions.

Businesses GoNaturePositive! highlighted the corporate shift towards sustainability, with discussions led by representatives from the EC Business@Biodiversity platform, ICLEI, KPMG, and the World Benchmarking Alliance, focusing on the acceleration of business actions for nature-positive transformations.

Communities GoNaturePositive! emphasised the crucial role of community engagement. Led by David Maddox of The Nature of Cities, this interactive session spotlighted the activation of citizens in supporting nature-positive changes.

This condensed gathering underscored the multifaceted approach needed to foster a sustainable, nature-positive future, combining finance, business innovation, and community action. The day culminated in a drinks reception held in the Old Library at Trinity College Dublin, providing attendees with a splendid opportunity for networking and reflection on the day's discussions in one of the city's most historic settings.

Day 4: NBS Site visits and Trinity Business Forum (March 7th)

The final day offered three parallel activities. The GoNaturePositive! Impact Board meeting explored synergies with existing initiatives towards a shared goal of nature-positive transformation. In parallel, the [Nature-based Solutions Task Force 3 Workshop](#) focused on aligning EU project activities with EC-EIB actions to highlight successful examples of blended financing of NNS. The third parallel session, led by Professor Marcus Collier of Trinity College Dublin, offered participants a walking tour to showcase award-winning urban NBS projects in Dublin. This site visit emphasised the importance of co-creation and community engagement within the context of the nature-positive economy.



GoNaturePositive! Consortium. Old Library, Trinity College, Dublin



Old Library, Trinity College, Dublin



Winner of the best photo competition! Niak Sian Koh, Oxford University & Stockholm Resilience Centre, Giulia Cecchinato from ETIFOR and Tetiana Konchenko, European Federation of Green Roof and Living Wall Associations – EFB

Siobhan McQuaid of Trinity Business School played a key role in organising and leading these events, with valuable support from the Trinity College Dublin team, [Horizon Nua](#), [ICLEI](#) and all partners. The four-day launch of GoNaturePositive! successfully brought together stakeholders and experts, fostering dialogue and paving the way for real action and impact.

Find the full event agenda [here](#).



The GoNaturePositive! Consortium, Galway.