

Peatlands for Business: Turning Restoration into Real Returns

Side Event to the Power to the Peatlands Conference 2026

Summary Report

Background

On 2 September 2026, Wetlands International Europe, Eurosite, the Michael Succow Foundation, Natuurpunt and Natuurmonumenten convened the side event *Peatlands for Business: Turning Restoration into Real Returns* alongside the Power to the Peatlands Conference in 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands.



The event brought together more than 50 farmers, landowners, businesses, investors, policymakers, researchers and civil society organisations from 11 different countries to explore how peatland restoration can move beyond pilot projects and early successes towards implementation at scale. Structured around three interactive discussion rounds on **Business & Finance**, **Farmers & Landowners** and **Policy & Decision-makers**, the event

created a unique opportunity for stakeholders with different perspectives and roles to exchange experiences, build new connections and identify common priorities for action.

The mix of perspectives and expertise in the room contributed to rich discussions and helped identify shared priorities for scaling peatland restoration across Europe. Several participants noted that opportunities for direct exchange between farmers, landowners, businesses, investors and policymakers remain limited, making the event a valuable space for exploring common challenges, identifying shared opportunities and building new connections.

Speakers

The discussions were informed by short pitches from practitioners, businesses, investors and policy experts:

Business & Finance	Farmers & Landowners	Policy & Decision-makers
Stefanie Figge-Wegener <i>WEPA</i>	Toos van Noordwijk <i>Wij.land</i>	Douwe Jonkers <i>Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security & Nature</i>
Niko Waesche <i>ZukunftMoor</i>	Gidion Kok and Arnoud Popping <i>Natuurmonumenten</i>	Garreth Kratz <i>German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation & Nuclear Safety</i>
Karl Byrne <i>Peatland Finance Ireland</i>	Freddie Ingleby <i>Caledonian Climate</i>	Niall Ó Brolcháin <i>University of Galway</i>

Key messages from the discussions

01	The challenge is no longer proving that peatland restoration works, but scaling it Participants agreed that successful examples of peatland restoration, rewetting and paludiculture already exist across Europe. The challenge now is to move beyond pilots and demonstration sites towards approaches that can be implemented at landscape scale and attract long-term investment.
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	Scaling up requires stronger collaboration, greater visibility of successful examples and practical mechanisms that enable proven approaches to be replicated at scale across regions.
02	Viable financing models are essential A recurring theme across all discussion rounds was that peatland restoration must make economic sense for those managing, financing and investing in the land. Participants emphasised that no single revenue stream is likely to be sufficient. Successful financing models will need to stack multiple sources, including paludiculture and other productive uses of wet peatlands, carbon and biodiversity finance, payments for ecosystem services, and public funding and agricultural support. The combination of these revenues into predictable cash flows will provide the incentive for private sector engagement to support peatland restoration.
03	Markets and value chains remain a critical bottleneck Participants highlighted that scaling peatland restoration requires both supply and demand to grow together. While innovative products and services from restored peatlands are emerging, markets for paludiculture products and ecosystem services, including carbon, biodiversity and water-related benefits, remain underdeveloped in many regions. Businesses require reliable supply, while producers and land managers need confidence that long-term demand exists before investing in new production systems. Strengthening value chains, connecting producers with buyers and creating greater market certainty were identified as key priorities.
04	Farmers and landowners must be at the center of the transition Participants repeatedly stressed that farmers and landowners are critical partners in scaling peatland restoration. Financial incentives were recognised as important, but not sufficient on their own. Key needs identified included long-term policy certainty, access to finance and advisory support, fair risk-sharing mechanisms, clear business opportunities and meaningful involvement in decision-making. A strong message from the discussions was that successful transitions depend on recognising and building on the knowledge, experience and practical realities of those managing the land. Farmers and landowners need to be engaged as

	partners in designing and implementing solutions, not merely recipients of policies or incentives.
05	Emerging investor interest, but reduced risk and stronger enabling conditions are needed The Business & Finance discussions revealed growing interest from investors and private sector actors in peatland restoration. However, several barriers continue to limit investment, including regulatory uncertainty, limited project pipelines, unclear revenue models and complex financing arrangements. Participants identified blended finance approaches combining public and private capital as a promising pathway forward. At the same time, they emphasised the need to reduce risk, strengthen enabling conditions and create investable opportunities at scale.
06	Policymakers play a critical enabling role Across all discussion rounds, participants emphasised the importance of governments providing clear and consistent direction, building trust among farmers, landowners and investors, and creating the conditions needed for peatland restoration to scale. Particular attention was given to the role of the Common Agricultural Policy, the Nature Restoration Regulation and emerging carbon and biodiversity frameworks in supporting peatland restoration and rewetting across Europe. Participants highlighted the need for long-term policy commitments, better alignment of public and private finance, stronger incentives for restoration outcomes, support for market development and greater policy coherence across sectors.

Looking Ahead

Financing peatland restoration needs solutions built from the ground up. Farmers, landowners and investors are directly involved and are being asked to take the risks. One of the strongest outcomes of the event was the opportunity to bring together stakeholders that do not often engage directly with one another. Participants highlighted the value of creating spaces where farmers, landowners, businesses, investors, policymakers, researchers and civil society organisations can exchange perspectives, identify common solutions and build partnerships needed to scale peatland restoration. Continued dialogue and co-creation were widely seen as essential for sharing lessons learned and advancing viable business models, financing approaches and partnership initiatives.

New connections and potential partnerships emerged during the event, demonstrating the value of cross-sector exchange and collaboration. Participants expressed interest in continuing discussions on restoration finance, paludiculture, market development, farmer engagement and enabling policy frameworks.

The overall message from the event was clear: the knowledge, interest and early examples already exist. The next challenge is to strengthen partnerships, mobilise investment, develop viable business and financing models, build functioning markets, and create the enabling conditions needed to scale peatland restoration across Europe.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all speakers, moderators and participants for their valuable contributions. The openness of the discussions, diversity of perspectives and willingness to engage across sectors made the event a rich and constructive exchange and laid the foundations for future collaboration on peatland restoration, sustainable land use and restoration finance.

Organised by



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