

Good Practice in Policy Integration of Nature-Based Solutions:

German Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity

Policy description

The German Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity (Aktionsplan Natürlicher Klimaschutz, ANK) is a national government strategy and funding instrument that aims to significantly improve the condition of ecosystems in Germany, for both climate and biodiversity goals, launched in 2023 and running to 2028. The ANK funds the voluntary implementation of nature-based climate action at scale, while supporting education and information activities, large research projects and monitoring.

Images



Peatland, Bavarian Forest National Park (source: [Davide Zanchettin](#), CC BY-NY 2.0)

Key messages on good practices for policy integration of NbS

- Germany is making major investments in NbS as a core strategy to achieve its climate targets for the Land Use, Land Use-Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector. The national programme is unique in promoting NbS for climate and biodiversity holistically and at scale, based on sound science and backed by substantial federal funding.
- The policy is an integrated, cross-sectoral approach with clear fields of action and has established a national and regional support structure and funding mechanisms. It emphasises support for research and education on nature-based climate action.
- There is a great emphasis on monitoring, iterative adaptation, and inclusive governance.

Type of policy instrument

Location and Scale

PLANNING INSTRUMENT
– government action
programme
ECONOMIC INSTRUMENT

Germany – national (federal) scale. Measures implemented at local and regional level.

- public funding programme with calls for grants	
NetworkNature theme(s)	Types of NbS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Adaptation, Mitigation and Resilience • Biodiversity Enhancement and Ecosystem Restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peatland restoration & rewetting • Wetland restoration & recreation • Natural water retention measures • Soil protection & restoration • Forest restoration & conversion • Urban greening & nature spaces • Other urban NbS (trees, SUDS, etc)
Description of policy	
<p>WHAT The Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity (ANK) is a national government strategy and funding instrument that aims to significantly improve the condition of ecosystems in Germany, by strengthening their resilience, restoration and protection, to meet climate mitigation and adaptation goals [1]. It was adopted by the German government in 2023 as the central instrument for achieving Germany's climate targets in the "Land Use, Land Use-Change and Forestry" (LULUCF) sector and addresses the dual crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss. The ANK provides financial incentives for the voluntary implementation of nature-based climate action at scale, while supporting education and information activities, large research projects and monitoring.</p> <p>HOW The action plan includes 69 measures within ten fields of action, including peatlands, forests, wilderness and urban areas [1]. Support is provided, for example, to local actors striving to rewet peatlands, agricultural businesses purchasing soil conserving machinery, or municipalities implementing nature-based climate action.</p> <p>WHO The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN) is the lead ministry responsible for the ANK. It sets the policy framework, administers funding, and oversees the strategic direction.</p> <p>The Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, BfN) acts as the central coordinating body for the ANK [2]. In this role, the BfN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides the implementation of funding programmes. • Supports all participating institutions, including federal states and relevant agencies. • Oversees monitoring and evaluation. • Supports the establishment of regional offices. <p>Other involved partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of Competence for Nature-based Climate Action (KNK): In October 2023, the Centre of Competence for Nature-based Climate Action (KNK) was established as a central focal point for topics related to nature-based climate action in Germany [1]. The KNK coordinates advice on nature-based climate action at federal level, offers information about available funding, provides science-based subject-specific information, and organises networking events for stakeholders and interested parties. One of its functions is to offer advice about the ANK funding programmes, which are rolled out through the funding banks or other partners. • ANK regional offices serve as focal points for regional and local stakeholders, and as of July 2025, an office has been set up in almost all of Germany's federal states. These will play a key role in further raising awareness and acceptance for nature-based climate action, providing information and advice, and helping to promote best practices. • Project management agencies and funding banks [3]. • Research institutions: the Interdisciplinary Scientific Advisory Board as well as several universities and research institutions participate in ANK-funded measures. 	
Policy Good Practice Criteria	

NbS mainstreamed in policy text and/or NbS as a central component of policy response	NbS form the core of the programme, with the aim described as being the protection and restoration of nature and ecosystems to meet climate goals for mitigation, adaptation and resilience and to restore species and habitats. The programme targets its measures to achieving synergies between biodiversity and climate to create win-wins both in rural and urban areas.
Societal challenge(s) are addressed and human wellbeing outcomes are specified	<p>The action programme is the central instrument for achieving Germany's climate targets of the LULUCF sector by strengthening resilience, restoration and protection of ecosystems. It addresses the dual crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss.</p> <p>It includes ten fields of action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protection of intact peatlands and rewetting 2. Near natural water balance with vibrant rivers, lakes and floodplains 3. Seas and coasts 4. Wilderness and protected areas 5. Forest ecosystems 6. Soils as carbon sinks 7. Nature-based climate action in urban and transport areas 8. Data collection, monitoring, modelling and reporting 9. Research and capacity building 10. Cooperation in the EU and the international community
Dedicated budget and/or funding stream	<p>From 2024 to 2028, a total of 3.5 billion EUR is earmarked for its implementation [1]. As of May 2025, 16 ANK funding programmes were launched and more than 9 000 projects accepted [5].</p> <p>The government is due to announce an update to the budget in the second half of 2025.</p> <p>The KTF (Climate and Transformation Fund) is the principal funding stream supporting the ANK. The KTF is administered by the Federal Ministry of Finance with parliamentary oversight and auditing by the Federal Audit Office.</p>
Indicators of impact and evaluation framework	The ANK operates a mandatory impact-orientated monitoring and evaluation system as a basis for measuring the success of the funding measures [4]. The evaluation framework includes both generic socio-economic indicators that apply to every project, as well as ecologic indicators specific to each field of action. The ANK will publish an evaluation report by the end of 2025, which will outline the degree of implementation and the impact of included measures.
Inclusivity and stakeholder engagement	<p>The ANK programme was developed through in-depth dialogues with stakeholders - including government institutions, associations, farmers, foresters, land managers, and other affected groups. The participatory process, including feedback on the draft Action Plan, generated 120 written opinions and over 1100 individual comments on a dedicated online platform.</p> <p>Involvement of local communities and other stakeholders has remained a feature of the programme and is a responsibility of the national advisory centre (KNK) and the regional offices.</p>
Consistency within policy mix	<p>The ANK programme is designed to align with the goals of German climate law (particularly the German LULUCF targets), and the national strategies for climate adaptation, biodiversity, peatland, and water:</p> <p>Federal Climate Action Act (KSG) Enacted in 2019, last amended in 2024. The revision adopted in December 2023 prioritises nature-based solutions to climate adaptation at the federal level and defines climate adaptation planning obligations for federal states and local governments [7]. The law defines German LULUCF targets for 2030 (minus 25 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent), 2040 (minus 35 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent), and 2050 (minus 40 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent).</p> <p>Constitutional reform for climate targets Approved in 2025</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bundestag enshrined reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2045 in Germany's constitution. <p>National Strategy on Biological Diversity 2030 Adopted in 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeks to restore 30% of degraded ecosystems by 2030 (EU target: 20%, CBD target: 30%). Emphasizes NbS for climate adaptation and promotes sustainable land use. <p>German National Water Strategy Adopted in 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes restoring floodplains, rewetting peatlands, agroecological practices, etc. Measure 60: A federal programme of climate measures in water management and water body development to be launched as part of the ANK. ANK funds and strategy are integrated with the “climate-related measures” and the establishment of the Blue Belt Programme to restore waterways to near-natural status [10]. <p>German National Peatland Protection Strategy Adopted in 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims to restore drained and degraded peatlands for carbon sequestration and other ecosystem services. The strategy credits funds made available by the ANK with enabling the quick implementation of “concrete measures on a large scale” [8]. <p>German CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) strategic plan 2023-2027 The protection of wetlands and peatlands is now integrated into the German CAP strategic plan.</p>
<p>Knowledge development and transmission</p>	<p>The ANK Field of Action 9 ‘Research and Capacity Building’ aims to support knowledge availability on NbS society-wide, and specifically in places where measures can be implemented. The ANK reaffirms a commitment to funding NbS research, including through the Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Germany Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change (DAS). This commitment has led to the establishment of a Centre of Competence for Nature-based Climate Action (launched in 2023) to coordinate NbS advisory services [1].</p> <p>Other avenues where the ANK programme illustrates support for knowledge sharing include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of portal for municipal land conservation (Aktion Fläche). Comprehensive integration of the programme into all stages of German education.
<p>Success Factors/Uptake/Impact</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant mobilisation of support and implementation of NbS across sectors and ecosystems, as concluded by a national study [10]. Support and funding for research and education are a key element. Implementation measures are complemented by a range of public outreach activities, networking events and capacity building offers. The support structure at national and regional levels through the KNK and the ANK regional offices provides information and support to a wide range of stakeholders, aiming to engage with federal, state and local authorities, non-governmental organisations, researchers, land users, landowners, and the wider public. 	
<p>Barriers and Challenges</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite the programme, the LULUCF sector is struggling to meet its targets. The sector produced net emissions of 68.7 million tCO₂e in 2023 [8]. Reduction in allocated funds and vulnerability to political changes. 	

- Implementation of the goals remains subject to future spending packages determined by the Bundestag. Future funding remains unclear until the federal budget is announced later in 2025.
- Implementation of the goals requires significant inter-jurisdictional coordination due to Germany's federal system where multiple autonomous levels of government share responsibilities, requiring collaboration to align policies and actions across federal, state, and local authorities.

Potential for Replication or Upscaling

The programme has mobilised significant support and action for NbS and ecosystem restoration across Germany, but in places there is insufficient capacity at the local level to absorb the available funding [10]. The LULUCF sector in Germany is struggling to meet its targets, pointing to the urgency of upscaling action and capacities [8]. There is currently a political discussion on the topic in Germany: in July 2025 there was a call from the German parliament to expand the ANK and give it a permanent legal basis [9]; and the German scientific advisory council for nature-based climate action has submitted a position paper arguing for an expansion of the programme [10].

The ANK states that the German government will step up its efforts to anchor NbS for climate and biodiversity as a priority area for political cooperation in the framework of international collaboration [1]. An evaluation concluded that the ANK has helped mainstream NbS internationally [10]. ANK measures directly support the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Paris Climate Agreement, the Convention to Combat Desertification, the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, and the UN 2030 Agenda among other multi-lateral initiatives where nature-based solutions are particularly relevant.

More Information & Sources

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[2] BfN Bundesamt für Naturschutz [Federal Nature Protection Agency] (2025) ANK Aktionsprogramm Natürlicher Klimaschutz (German Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity).
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[3] Zukunft – Umwelt – Gesellschaft Z-U-G <https://www.z-u-g.org/en/> ; KfW bank <https://www.kfw.de/Homepage-2.html> ; FNR Fachagentur Nachwachsende Rohstoffe e. V. <https://international.fnr.de/> ; Landwirtschaftliche Rentenbank (Germany's development agency for agribusiness and rural areas)
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[4] Interview with Maika Müller, Policy Advisor, KNK, July 2025

[5] Kompetenzzentrum NK [Centre of Competence for Nature-based Climate Action] (2025) Overview of all open and closed funding windows (only available in German language): <https://www.kompetenzzentrum-nk.de/foerderung/>

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[9] Bundestag (2025) Antrag der Abgeordneten Steffi Lemke, Dr. Jan-Niclas Gesenhues, Julia Schneider, Lisa Badum, Harald Ebner, Niklas Wagener, Dr. Armin Grau, Dr. Zoe Mayer, Karl Bär, Johannes Wagner, Katrin Uhlig, Stefan Schmidt, Dr. Ophelia Nick, Swantje Henrike Michaelsen, Matthias Gastel, Julian Joswig, Sylvia Rietenberg, Victoria Broßart und der Fraktion BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN: Frühjahrsdürre und Hitzepronosen ernst nehmen – Jetzt entschlossen Handeln. Deutscher Bundestag 21. Wahlperiode 03.06.2025. Drucksache 21/351.
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